

Studies on Modern China



IMAGINING THE PEOPLE

Chinese Intellectuals
and the
Concept of Citizenship,
1890–1920

Edited by

JOSHUA A. FOGEL
AND PETER G. ZARROW

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An East Gate Book

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK



An East Gate Book

First published 1997 by M.E. Sharpe

Published 2015 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Imagining the people: Chinese intellectuals and the concept of citizenship, 1890–1920 / edited by Joshua A. Fogel and Peter G. Zarrow.
p. cm.—(Studies on modern China.)

“An East gate book.”

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-7656-0098-6 (cloth : alk. paper)

1. Citizenship—China. 2. Civics, Chinese. 3. China—Politics and government—19th century. 4. China—Politics and government—20th century.

I. Fogel, Joshua A., 1950— .

II. Zarrow, Peter Gue. III. Series.

JQ1517.A2I44 1997

323.6'0951'09034—dc21 97-11940

CIP

ISBN 13: 9780765600981 (hbk)

Contents

List of Contributors	vii
Introduction: Citizenship in China and the West <i>Peter Zarrow</i>	3
1. Civic Associations, Political Parties, and the Cultivation of Citizenship Consciousness in Modern China <i>Liu Zehua and Liu Jianqing</i>	39
2. Nationalism, Citizenship, and the Old Text/New Text Controversy in Late Nineteenth Century China <i>Anne Cheng</i>	61
3. The People, People's Rights, and Rebellion: The Development of Tan Sitong's Political Thought <i>Ingo Schäfer</i>	82
4. Dynasty, State, and Society: The Case of Modern China <i>Murata Yūjirō</i>	113
5. From Civil Society to Party Government: Models of the Citizen's Role in the Late Qing <i>Don C. Price</i>	142
6. Publicists and Populists: Including the Common People in the Late Qing New Citizen Ideal <i>Joan Judge</i>	165

7. Local Self-Government: Citizenship Consciousness and the Political Participation of the New Gentry-Merchants in the Late Qing <i>Ma Xiaoquan</i>	183
8. Imagining “Society” in Early Twentieth-Century China <i>Michael Tsin</i>	212
9. Liang Qichao and the Notion of Civil Society in Republican China <i>Peter Zarrow</i>	232
10. Evolving Prescriptions for Social Life in the Late Qing and Early Republic: From <i>Qunxue</i> to Society <i>Wang Fan-shen</i>	258
Afterword: The People, a Citizenry, Modern China <i>Joshua A. Fogel</i>	279
Glossary of Chinese Characters	283
Index	301

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Introduction

Citizenship in China and the West

Peter Zarrow

As the revolutions of the twentieth century have worked themselves out, a profound shift in the locus of sovereignty has occurred. Citizenship has proved to be a key concept in the rise of republicanism. If the republic belongs to its people—the citizens—the locus of sovereignty must shift away from the ruler (whether king or emperor, representative of God or son of Heaven). Subjecthood has thus evolved from the rulership which emphasizes the duties of the subject to a more contractual and contingent rulership which acknowledges the active agency of citizens. Chinese elites were concerned with “the people” long before the advent of citizenship, of course. The long *minben* (people as the basis) tradition of Confucian thought, like the moral bases of rule in other civilizations, did imply mutual obligation.¹ The *minben* tradition might be considered the prehistory of the idea of popular sovereignty, but thinking precisely and explicitly in terms of citizenship did not emerge until the late nineteenth century under Western influence. Such ideas as legal limits and definitions of kingship and the state, an institutional framework including parliaments and elections, an active press and public opinion, civic virtue, national unity, and social progress proved enormously appealing.

In the early twentieth century many Chinese radicals completely abandoned the moral-sacred kingship propagated by imperial Confucianism for an essentially civil and utilitarian vision emphasizing what intellectuals of the time called “wealth and power” (*fuqiang*) and based on a sense of political community.² The modern political community, conceived in participatory terms, promised to be both more egalitarian and more disciplinary than the moral community of Confucianism. By the 1890s, Chinese intellectuals were concerned, and sometimes

4 IMAGINING THE PEOPLE

obsessed, with the question of what institutional reforms would simultaneously strengthen the state, uplift the people, and bring the nation into the modern age.

This book focuses on intellectuals, publicists, activists, and political figures in the late Qing dynasty and the early republic. The chapters encompass local as well as national figures and cover the period roughly from the 1890s to the 1920s, or the dawn of modern politics in China. The Revolution of 1911 ended the 2,000-year-old dynastic system, though it failed to provide China with any long-term, stable, and unified form of political rule. Educated Chinese of the period agonized over the fate of their country and searched for ways to build the nation. They were the last generation imbued with the Confucian classics, yet they were completely willing—indeed, eager—to learn what they could of Western philosophy and history. Though capable of great enthusiasm, overall they took a skeptical but not debunking approach to their study of both Chinese and Western traditions. The essays in this volume discuss such well-known figures as Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong, Kang Youwei, Zhang Binglin, and Fu Sinian, as well as lesser-known journalists and figures of local political importance. It is clear that all these figures used the cultural resources of both Confucianism and Western philosophy. In their search for solutions to China's problems, they began to develop and elaborate on ideas of citizenship.

The concept of citizenship developed in the West; it is probably not applicable historically to other societies. Ideas of citizenship have been difficult to isolate from such other broad concepts as nationalism, civil society, and democracy.³ Nonetheless, both the exact meaning of the word and the attainment of its promise proved to be potent issues in non-Western societies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Definitions of citizenship revolve around membership and exclusion on the one hand and rights and obligations on the other; concepts of citizenship tend to emphasize either community (the political life) or the state (legal status).

For many Chinese intellectuals around the turn of the century, citizenship, whether of the community or of the state, appeared to be a factor in the successful internal organization of Western societies and therefore a social and political feature they wished to encourage. If China lacked the conditions to generate citizenship historically, we may nonetheless find certain traditions that were helpful to the production of citizenship. Among these were a strong sense of ethnic and proto-national identity,⁴ a state largely consisting of a complex bureaucracy which was treated as independent of the ruler; and subjecthood itself, which created a clear locus of sovereignty in the emperor. Yet although sovereignty was located in the emperor, a long tradition of thinking about “politics” in terms of administration (*jingshi*) tended to separate the state from the dynasty (dynasties came and went according to the dynastic cycle, in Confucian theory).⁵ Loyalty was not absolutely owed to an evil or mistaken emperor, and the literati owed a kind of subjecthood to the Confucian moral community as well as to the king.

Late Qing intellectuals believed that modernization and morality were compatible. Indeed, national and local elites, even while welcoming political change, hoped to use morality to ward off the threat of “chaos” that seemed to attend it. That political rule could and should be moral was of course a central Confucian precept, but by the early twentieth century, radicals had abandoned the notion of the exemplary “gentleman” (*junzi*). Instead, they emphasized that “public morality” (or “civic virtue,” *gongde*) had to apply to all the people equally; the world did not consist of active gentlemen and passive commoners but rather, at least ideally, of citizens in the broad sense of the word.⁶ Chinese intellectuals thus deployed the concept of citizenship *not* simply by accepting “influences” from abroad but by utilizing a complex mix of ideas. For example, although the charisma of the sage (*sheng*) has little place in modern Chinese thought, the moral autonomy of the gentleman was a key component in modern notions of the individual and the citizen, despite the abandonment of the “gentleman” as a complete personality ideal. Although conceptions of citizenship were a product of Western history, its meaning in Chinese thought and history naturally is not the same.

Whereas the story of Chinese democracy has received considerable scholarly attention, the subject of Chinese citizenship has the advantage of being less teleological and value laden; citizenship was more than conceptual.⁷ It developed in modern China by meeting certain needs: to define membership in the national community, to establish rights and duties or giving a certain protected status for these members, and to encourage some kind of participation in state and society. A history of citizenship in China would illuminate meanings now given to the word *citizenship* as well as the polity of modern China; such a history is beyond the scope of this introduction and even this book, but we hope to throw some light on the subject. In terms of a *prehistory* of citizenship in China, it is worth noting that at no time did China possess an equivalent of the polis which formed the starting point for most Western thinking about citizenship. The great tension in traditional Chinese political thought was between the legitimate powers of the emperor and the proper role of the literati (to be partly resolved by the moral rectification of both) rather than competing forms of government.⁸ Although Liang Qichao (1873–1929), for one, was not trying to create Confucian sages through his project to “renovate the people,” he not only promoted Confucian self-cultivation and elements of Confucian morality as the basis of a personal ethics he thought useful to modern citizenship but also favored a universalization of public life which was by no means foreign to the Confucian worldview. His calls to educate the lower classes served simultaneously to reinforce and challenge the position of the educated elite. Earlier Confucians such as Zhu Xi (1130–1200) and Wang Yangming (1482–1529) had encouraged and developed the “community compact” (*xiangyue*), but this historically fell far short of universalizing public life.⁹ If the traditional sage ideal was oriented to the moral perfection of the world (*tianxia*), Liang’s goals were basically oriented toward

6 IMAGINING THE PEOPLE

the nation. Nonetheless, “public morality” for Liang was not merely amoral pursuit of wealth and power. This is because he linked public morality directly to private morality: men of resolution (*zhishi*) pursue the common good on the basis of self-cultivation.¹⁰ Individual goodness lies behind Liang’s genuinely ethical approach to civic concerns.¹¹

The point is that however circumscribed the arena of Liang’s concern by traditional standards—the nation-state as opposed to the world or even the cosmos—Liang’s conception of the individual citizen was largely informed by Confucian standards. Not merely techniques of character development such as quiet-sitting (*jingzuo*) but also its ethical roots in good-knowing (*liangzhi*) and the unity of knowledge and action (*zhixing heyi*) concerned Liang. Citizens had to rely on their own sense of truth and morality and not be swayed by outside factors; to do this, they had to learn to free themselves from selfish desires, finding in inner calmness their innate good-knowing. Put in these terms, it might seem that Liang Qichao was creating a universal model of personhood, but in fact he understood that only in particular social contexts could citizens survive and flourish. And in modern times such social contexts could refer only to the nation-state. Citizenship was not an abstract ideal but part of a dialectic between morally autonomous individuals and constitutional orders: there could be no citizens without a nation-state, just as the nation-state would collapse without true citizens. Liang believed less that citizenship stemmed from the “right” to participate in political questions than that it lay in the pursuit of “public morality” through political activism.

Perspectives on Citizenship

In the past few years “citizenship” has come under renewed historical and theoretical scrutiny.¹² Social thinkers currently find certain definitions of citizenship a useful tool for analyzing contemporary issues—from the status of minorities, the underclass, and women to civic and ethnic identity, regional and global cooperation, and the future of democracy. In spite of the vagueness of the word, or perhaps just because citizenship can mean so many things, it seems to illuminate not merely the political but also the economic and the social. Recent events in Europe have particularly fostered interest in citizenship. The collapse of communism obviously raised the question of how ethnic groups and nation-states would be reconciled in Eastern Europe, while immigrants to Western Europe seem to be defying traditional notions of assimilation through citizenship. In Western Europe and North America, challenges to the welfare state are aggravating the problem of unofficial but real second- and third-class citizenship. Large-scale migrations from former African and Asian colonies into the former mother countries of Western Europe have unleashed a backlash of unconcealed racism. Waves of refugees are not only straining First World societies but the underdeveloped world as well. In the United States, illegal immigration from Mexico

into California led in the 1994 elections to a contentious but very popular anti-immigration law aimed at further disfranchising noncitizens of certain rights. A new U.S. welfare bill will deny aid to legal immigrants, and questions about immigration and citizenship are being discussed internationally. Throughout the world, the ambiguity of citizenship defined by ethnicity, by culture, and by geography is under strain.¹³

For the Western democracies, mass unemployment, nationalism and xenophobia, as well as global integration (ranging from do-good organizations like Greenpeace and Amnesty International to various cultural media and multinational corporations which act at times above national law) all challenge at least the traditional notion of citizenship as full and exclusive membership in a civic community. The linkage between the nation-state and citizenship, in place since the eighteenth century, makes it inevitable that as the nation-state is challenged, the notion of citizenship too must once again be transformed. Indeed, insofar as we consider Western societies to be more or less liberal and capitalist, the fact remains that liberalism and capitalism both transgress civic boundaries.¹⁴ The growth of the marketplace and the image of *Homo economicus*, whose highest function is to make self-serving choices, have also denigrated the state and hence citizenship, and they leave little room for social solidarity of any kind. The transnational movements of people, ideas, goods, and images now heightened by the globalization of capital is highly disruptive to the sense of community that lies behind citizenship.¹⁵

Citizenship may also be seen as "interpretive" (the citizen perceives and judges), as well as "a space for conflict, powers and domination."¹⁶ A sense of a crisis of citizenship is thus engendered by the general postmodern fracturing of authority and identity: it is not clear what remains of citizenship without a clear and final focus of sovereignty such as the nation-state provided. Economic changes in the advanced world, particularly the flourishing of service industries and the creation of nonmaterial products, such as various forms of financing and information, have also questioned the position of the worker as "maker" and so challenged one of the basic senses of personhood to have emerged out of the industrial revolution. What remains of citizenship after personhood has been divorced from the material world remains to be seen.¹⁷ Yet much of the hope for citizenship outlined by T.H. Marshall in his classic study of the postwar period still resonates in the term. Marshall found that citizenship had grown from signifying civil rights in the eighteen century to political rights, like suffrage, in the nineteenth century, and he saw the growth of social rights (the welfare state) in the twentieth century as representing the culmination of citizenship.¹⁸

In the case of China today, it might be argued (as Liu Zehua and Liu Jianqing in this volume would probably argue) that China has not had enough historical experience with citizenship for there to be a crisis over its meaning. Yet the Communists' control of China successfully established "citizenship" in at least one important respect—that of popular participation at certain levels of political

and economic activity. The Communist state, for all its current problems, has now by and large achieved to a degree the goals of wealth and power (*fuqiang*) sought throughout the twentieth century, as well as a high level of popular nationalism, effective bureaucratic centralization, and government control over local society. There are limits to state power, and overall China remains a poor country with an enormous population burden and an overtaxed infrastructure; nonetheless, the contemporary Chinese state can make a fair claim to be fulfilling the “wealth and power” goals of previous generations. In this sense, China offers its citizens membership in a modern nation-state. Yet the rapid expansion of the Chinese economy since the late 1970s and a certain weakening of the control of the state at least over some of the daily life activities of the Chinese has encouraged market relations to challenge other forms of personal relations. The rise of civil society and the tendency of people to find happiness in personal relations and other private goals represents a major turn away from the more public life of the Maoist years.

Under different conditions, then, the relationship between the people and the state in China (whether one terms this citizenship or not) is in a state of crisis structurally similar to that in the West. Obviously, with its large rural and farming population of some 70 to 75 percent of the total population, its masses of low-wage workers, its utter lack of independent unions or the political freedoms of Western nations, and its inability to ensure smooth transitions of power, China looks very different from any of the Western nations. Nonetheless, citizenship is, by its very rootedness in the state, a “coercive bargain” and a way of organizing commitments among strangers.¹⁹ The growth of capitalism—an emphatically global capitalism at that—reorganizes relations among strangers and thus offers the same challenge to Chinese versions of citizenship as it does to citizenship in the nation-states of the West.

“Citizenship” in the West

Membership in a nation-state with its attendant legal, social, and moral rights and obligations; participation in public life in one way or another; and sharing in the destiny of the political community—even to the point of self-sacrifice—make up the modern concept of citizenship.²⁰ If “citizenship” in the West is rooted in the Hellenistic city-states of antiquity, it remains an ambiguous and protean term which is today used largely in a sense determined by the French Revolution and the modern age rather than its earlier meanings. Those who reflect mainstream political thought focus on the legislative and juridical aspects of citizenship: it is fundamentally a legal concept designating the relationship between state and individual. At the same time, a second strain of citizenship remains important. Citizenship is an expression of community (inclusion and exclusion). At one extreme, this view emphasizes shared participation in all aspects of public life, including but not limited to the political and treating

private life as secondary, though more often participation may be relatively passive—as in occasional voting, for example. Sociologically, then, citizenship is less about rights and duties than *practices*, including not only legal but also cultural and economic practices which arose historically out of social struggle and political change.²¹ In the modern nation-state, citizenship is the locus of decisions about the distribution of power and economic resources, and it lies at the center of questions about social solidarity and order. These two perspectives on citizenship correspond to differing views of the nation-state. The political accords with a view of the state as a neutral ground for resolving conflicts; the sociological with a view of the nation as a community of shared purposes and assumptions.

Citizenship in the ancient world was a severely restricted privilege embracing both legal and communitarian elements to a high degree. Citizens tended to be legally classified, and substantive rights matched status. Above all, full citizens shared administrative responsibilities and public life was valued for its own sake. Today, by way of contrast, citizenship is almost universal but practiced differentially in vague degrees (e.g., women seem fully to have been considered citizens in the nineteenth century but were not given the franchise until the twentieth and even today are generally not considered to be potential soldiers).²² Many societies offer most of the privileges of citizenship, from legal protections to social services, to foreigners in their midst while at the same time poor citizens are often effectively denied the right to participate in the political life of their country.²³ Nonetheless, the development of notions about citizenship in the ancient and medieval world is worth noting to highlight what is distinctively modern about the concept as well as the antiquity of some of versions of citizenship.²⁴ Devotion to the larger good through civic virtue, political participation, and some kind of exclusion of foreigners is implicit in all forms of citizenship (if today nearly all persons are citizens somewhere, they are simultaneously noncitizens everywhere else). Citizenship has always been tied to the territorial state. From Athens to Sparta, from the Roman Empire to modern China, citizenship has meant more, or less, than democratic institutions. The citizens of the city-republics of the ancient world, however, dealt with each other face to face, honored martial heroism, and lived in a participatory and communitarian system, while contemporary citizens, for all their legal rights, are mostly passive and reactive, anonymous members of vast economic and political organizations, and eager to reward economic achievement rather than martial virtue.²⁵ By no means was citizenship in ancient Greece a purely political concept: perhaps its paramount meaning was personal freedom in the sense of being at liberty, though not with great leeway for self-expression. Under the Roman Empire citizenship carried specific legal and what we would now term commercial rights—of litigation and property, for example.

In Aristotle's conception of citizenship, however, the patriarchs of the polis were precisely and literally the rulers and the ruled, and these citizens freed themselves of private concerns to realize the true nature of humans as political

animals.²⁶ This strain of citizenship seems very foreign to China, though the Confucian emphasis on devotion to the public good would perhaps have appealed to Aristotle. By the late Qing, Chinese thinkers such as Liang Qichao and Yan Fu (1853–1921) thought that popular participation might reenergize the nation and thus sought to politicize the people. The Roman concept of legal rights succeeded in creating a new kind of citizenship—one significantly opposed to the Greek conception in many ways but which worked for the vast Roman Empire—and it was this emphasis on legal rights which Enlightenment thinkers used in constructing their concepts of personhood over a millennium later. Citizenship as a means of expanding the population of rights-bearers became a revolutionary force after about 1700. The expansion of the West—spatially (through territorial conquest), economically, and demographically—created great internal pressures to give more persons more rights.

If citizenship had largely disappeared in the feudal period, the rise of the absolutist states marked a return to Roman law. The sixteenth-century jurist Jean Bodin defined citizenship as a protected if passive category.²⁷ In the eighteenth century, citizenship may be thought of as a reward for service. Indeed, Peter Reisenberg argues that citizenship as “active service” helped define one aspect of the king’s subjects even in the “age of absolutism.”²⁸ If such a citizenship lacked the ancient sense of political participation and sovereignty, subjecthood was nonetheless universal in the sense that nearly all residents of the kingdom were subjects of the king. When citizenship emerged out of the *ancien régime*, it inherited this universal quality. It was, in fact, the English Revolution of the seventeenth century which turned citizenship into an anti-monarchical ideology and thus associated it with republicanism or at least constitutionalism.

The American Declaration of Independence and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man then linked the notion of fundamental rights—fundamental in the sense of “temporal and logical priority”—to popular sovereignty.²⁹ Natural law theory, however, did not necessitate democratic norms; the people were sovereign as the ultimate source from which the social contract is derived, but the contract itself could justify, say, monarchy. If natural law theory might imply that the prepolitical person was whole and social while citizenship was merely secondary or contingent, the political solution to the problem of power was representation. Yet representation seems inevitably to challenge the idea of citizenship as a realm of participation and to compromise the personhood of the citizen.³⁰ The political solution of representation was reached through the political act of revolution, which is inseparable from modern conceptions of citizenship. This is as true of China as of the West. Revolution created a narrative of broadening inclusion through citizenship. And revolution thereby forged new links between a people (collectively both subjects and citizens) and the state, for the fundamental myth of revolution is that a new state springs from “the people” itself.

Rousseau's position in the history of citizenship is central.³¹ Even his favorite examples of "citizenship"—Geneva and Sparta—were for him debased and denatured artificial locations where man was free only because he was self-repressed and without conflicting loyalties. For Rousseau the citizen was both sovereign and subject, yet undivided; there was no subjection in a citizenship society because all its members were whole, though largely politically passive, obeying laws. Still, they were free because they obeyed laws they themselves had (actively) made. Rousseau inspired the Jacobin dream of universal, active citizenship. The *Social Contract* was first translated into literary Chinese in the late 1870s and published in serial form from February 1882 by the Japanese scholar and political activist Nakae Chōmin, who hoped his work would become influential in China and Korea as well as his native land.³² His hopes were met, as will be discussed in the next section, below.

The French Revolution thus gave China a fundamental statement of the rights and obligations of citizens. Furthermore, the very status of citizen implied equality by denying the political significance of social distinctions.³³ As such, citizenship redefined the nation: it referred to 25 million Frenchmen versus 200,000 privileged aristocrats. It was the 25 million who truly possessed rights and liberties. They represented national unity, though in fact they soon began to splinter—categories of citizenship were defined in terms of property or later "virtue" or progressive activism. From another angle, citizenship in the French Revolution was a matter of self-identification and dedication to civic virtue and the nation. As such, citizens naturally opposed privilege and favored "the nation." By 1790 the old order had been abolished. "The polity had to be built anew, and with the destruction of privilege each individual now had an equal role and place in it. Membership in the nation, rather than privilege mediated through the monarch, became the basis of rights in the polity."³⁴

Western concepts of citizenship contain deep tensions. One can hardly be a citizen without a state, yet state and citizen strain against one another in the liberal conception of the citizen as an individual with numerous forms of identity, loyalties, and pleasures. One can hardly be a citizen in any modern sense of the term without a civil society, yet civil society remains in tension with both citizenship and the state. For on the one hand, civil society threatens the state with voluntary associations which could conceivably replace it, while on the other it threatens to replace citizenship—a coercive and inclusive category—with associational freedom and exclusivity. Since the eighteenth century, nationalist movements have justified citizenship and almost certainly eased the process of extending citizenship to members of the national community, yet nationalism has also been used to justify oppressive states which transgress the rights of their own citizens (and often citizens of other nations). The liberal version of citizenship—with citizens bearing rights, including the right of political participation and quite probably economic rights—would seem to require civil society in the sense of associa-

tional freedom. Nonetheless, civil society easily burgeons to the point at which it needs the state to regulate it.³⁵

Only in quite modern times did citizenship become an inclusive category within territorial states. Still, it is citizenship that has defined modern struggles for protection against authorities and for the inclusion of out-groups.³⁶ Although the French Revolution gave women a certain status as *citoyennes*, they were firmly and deliberately excluded from public life.³⁷ The exclusion of women may well have been an integral aspect of defining full citizenship for increasing numbers of men in the West throughout the nineteenth century. The question of whether citizenship excluded or denigrated women in contravention of Enlightenment ideals or in confirmation of a sense that women were politically null—in other words, whether gender exclusion was historically contingent or necessary—need not detain us here. The point is that in modern China the situation was very different. Citizenship and feminism were largely treated together as closely related problems. The same promoters of nationalism and republicanism or citizenship were also concerned with women's rights. Of course, there were limits to the feminism of these men; feminists generally argued their case for the equality of women in China while accepting a discourse dominated by nationalist concerns: China needed the active support of its women just as it needed the participation of the formerly passive common people. Chinese thinkers and activists treated workers and peasants in roughly the same way—as national resources that needed to be developed. Chinese conceptions of citizenship were thus inclusive and elitist from the beginning.

Aristotle's definition of citizenship, on the other hand, emphasized the notion of freedom: only men free from "necessity" could exercise rational choice. Persons who were dependent—slaves, women, workers, children—could not be citizens. Rousseau democratized this vision in a neoclassical formula which claimed to reconcile freedom of the individual with the group. Rousseau focused on the individual's achieving moral agency through citizenship. Both the issue of dependency and that of moral autonomy were key to the intellectual debates in China in the early twentieth century. Liang Qichao once rested his argument for women's rights on the grounds that their oppression stemmed from their dependency while this very dependency not only caused them to suffer but also weakened the nation.³⁸ Liu Shipei (1884–1919) emphasized a view of equality which he conceived in terms of liberty and independence. He rested his argument both on the premise of natural rights (*tianfu renquan*), which he attributed to Rousseau, and on the theory of innate good-knowing (*liangzhi*) propounded by Wang Yangming. Thinking of class inequalities, Liu Shipei wrote in 1907:

The inequality among people stems from their lack of independence. Some rely on other people while some enslave other people from above. If people rely on other people, then we will see the enslavement of people (for example,

when people rely on a ruler, the ruler will then enslave them; when women rely on their husbands, their husbands will then enslave them; and when workers rely on capitalists, the capitalists will then enslave them). They are tied together but they don't know they are being oppressed (*shouzhi*). Since they cannot be independent, they then lose their right of liberty. Since they cannot be free, they then lose their right of equality.³⁹

Citizenship in China

In the West, it was perhaps not a great step in an age of nascent capitalism to move from the concept of natural rights to a notion that society was produced by a "contract" defining the rights and duties between citizen and state. However, this was a style of thinking foreign to modern Chinese intellectuals. "Contracts" in Western legal theory imply both mutuality and antagonism or at least competing interests. Yet the Chinese intellectuals of the late Qing and beyond seldom thought of the state or the community and the individual as naturally antagonistic. Few Chinese intellectuals conceived the individual-state relationship in quasi-legal formulas, whereas natural or God-given rights, derived from a theory of natural law, retain a legalistic force in the West. The Chinese "social contract" (*minyue*) was conceived in harmony. "Rights" did not, then, evolve as individual claims against the state so much as a limited arena of legitimate interests.⁴⁰ The Western doctrine of utilitarianism was sometimes denounced in the late Qing, precisely because it was associated with selfishness (the doctrine of happiness) and calculation (social tradeoffs).

We cannot solve here the contentious question of whether the Chinese had a concept of natural law; the point is that seldom if ever in Chinese philosophy was there any concept of autonomous (nonsocial) individuals coming together to make up a social unit.⁴¹ Persons existed in mutuality only, and individuals were defined by their relationships or roles. However, this must not be thought to imply that individuals lacked an inner life, much less moral responsibility for their actions. Indeed, partly under the influence of Buddhism and especially with the advent of Neo-Confucianism in the Song dynasty, Chinese thinkers devoted a great deal of attention to the question of how to become a good person. In a tradition explicitly traced back to Mencius (third century B.C.), the state was analogized to a family writ large and family relationships were used as models for other relationships.

In the case of the French Revolution, Lynn Hunt has found that the value of *fraternité* aided in the creation of male equality, or what might be called citizens as brothers.⁴² Fatherhood played no particular role in this: the new revolutionary state was not sacralized by "founding fathers," while at the same time real paternal power in France had been eroding for some time. The American Revolution, by way of contrast, was soon seen as created by founding fathers who also wrote a semi-sacred Constitution—men who themselves generally thought well of their real fathers who had raised them to be free.⁴³ The Chinese Revolu-

tion of 1911 might seem to have more in common with the American—yet as Don C. Price shows, paternal authority remained strong while the Chinese emphasis on *tongbao* (“compatriot,” but literally meaning “shared paternity”) reasserted the notion of the state as family.⁴⁴ *Tongbao* (like *zuguo*, “ancestral nation”) encouraged an organic nationalism rather than an egalitarian *fraternité*. Revolutionaries thus justified risking themselves and their families by conceiving national identity in terms of kinship. Price concludes that “the emerging ancestral conception of the nation and the failure of the Revolution of 1911 to embody the issue of autonomy (because the revolution was for the ancestors and the nation, not for the sons) did tend to set a course for Chinese politics in which it was difficult for citizens to control the state or to resist state control.”⁴⁵ Yet the debates leading up to the Revolution of 1911 also disseminated the rhetoric of constitutionalism among the educated elite in China. The sense of peoplehood was conceived as complementary to citizenship, or perhaps even the basis of citizenship.

In this regard, it should be noted that the Chinese interpreted Rousseau through the prism of constitutionalism. Rousseau was largely understood as calling for popular participation (*minquan*) through “citizenship” in a cohesive community whose members are as nearly equal to one another as possible. Equality—such an emotional issue for Rousseau with his contempt for aristocrats and his acute sense of the distorting psychology of status differences—was seldom problematized during the late Qing. Based on their reading of Western history, Chinese ranging from Liang Qichao to Sun Yat-sen noted that China’s virtual elimination of an aristocracy by the close of the Warring States era (221 B.C.) had led to a basically egalitarian society with a good deal of social mobility.⁴⁶ This is, of course, “egalitarian” in reference to opportunity, not status or wealth, and there were those, like Liu Shipei, who explicitly called for class struggle in the last years of the Qing, pointing to the need to “liberate” workers, peasants, and women. Nonetheless, the sense that class differences in China were relatively small—and perhaps a certain satisfaction in the troubles that class struggle was causing in the West—were widespread into the 1920s.

Rousseau’s indignant egalitarianism was thus less important in China than was his call for popular involvement and participation. The problematic for late Qing intellectuals, then, might be summed up as the movement from personhood to citizenship as much as the movement from subject to citizen. That is to say, they did not find the cure for oppression to lie in rights but rather sought a cure for disunity and familism in peoplehood. Enemies were not discovered in parts of the whole but in outside, foreign “peoples” like the Manchu oppressors. Still, the self-disciplined and morally autonomous individual of neo-Confucian training was both the basis of the new citizen and, until absorbed into peoplehood, an obstacle. The ancient notion that all humans are in some sense naturally moral and certainly capable of acting morally possessed some of the same force and function as the West’s professed faith in the inherent dignity of

the individual. Chinese intellectuals held that individuals were to be integrated into society through means which would produce national harmony. (Even in the case of the anarchist Liu Shipei, his goal was human harmony at the level of the world rather than the nation.) They held that such integration could come without risk to the individual since, like Rousseau, they conceived the project of citizenship as ultimately erasing the boundary between state and individual.

Liang Qichao, for example, held that “grouping” (*qun*) was natural to humans. In 1897 he wrote that grouping was both a natural principle of integration operating through evolution and a political ideal. The key issues to note here are that Liang thought that for his times grouping would occur at the level of the nation-state rather than, say, the tribe or the world; that he felt grouping implied the active political participation of all members of the group; that he encouraged and organized voluntary associations such as study societies; and that he anticipated no contradictions between individuals and groups and the newly democratized state.⁴⁷ Liu Shipei opposed the state as humanity’s ultimate enemy, but he too promoted citizenship in the sense of personal qualities that would provide a sufficient basis for voluntary groupings that would make government superfluous.

Liang’s nationalism stemmed from his reading of the political realities of the day. Western imperialism was confronting China with challenges so great as to threaten the very existence of the Chinese state and people. He did not despise the Manchus as foreign oppressors but hoped reforms could turn the traditional empire into a modern nation-state. In contrast, the more visceral nationalism of Zhang Binglin (1869–1936) was rooted both in social Darwinism and the Qing discourse on racial identity which formed the background of late Qing anti-Manchurism.⁴⁸ Social Darwinism, first transmitted through translations of Herbert Spencer and Thomas Huxley, was a doctrine of the struggle for survival among national groupings which seemed to explain the success of Western imperialism and dominated progressive thought in the late Qing.⁴⁹ Social Darwinism represented a profound break with traditional cosmology and held emancipatory promise; rather than counseling determinism, Chinese thinkers held that social Darwinism suggested programs of national improvement.⁵⁰ Zhang Binglin developed a distinctly racialist anti-Manchurism in which China’s Manchu rulers were perceived as irredeemably evil, conspiring to eradicate China’s historical institutions and records and to cut the (Han) Chinese people off from their traditions, thereby severing their connections to historical memories. Conservative in many cultural matters, Zhang became a revolutionary in the cause of this preservationist goal. In the decade before the 1911 Revolution, Zhang outlined a formula which linked blood (race), land, and culture—and which thereby defined Chinese citizenship in exclusionary terms as part of an ongoing historical development.

If Liang Qichao tended to think of citizenship in terms of the state, Zhang emphasized the nation. Both sought to rationalize the Chinese national community in a world of competing nation-states. John Fitzgerald has pointed to the centrality of the metaphor of “awakening” in the great transformation of Chinese

consciousness and politics in modern times.⁵¹ The self, the citizen, the nation, and the state were all subject to awakening—to self-awakening or to being awakened. Unfortunately, these four subjects did not necessarily develop in tandem. China's leaders or would-be leaders might feel that there was a preexisting state in search of citizens, or an enlightened self in search of a nation, and so forth. Which was prior? These themes are pursued in greater detail in the section below.

Citizenship and Late Qing Constitutionalism

Some contemporary thinkers hold that a type of world citizenship may be emerging.⁵² Liu Shipei, although attempting to create a nonpolitical public space, certainly was thinking of world citizenship insofar as citizenship can be imagined without a state—participatory, egalitarian, and with a high degree of liberty and autonomy for individuals and voluntary groups. However, in modern times citizenship has taken national forms and rested on a sense of social, often ethnic, solidarity. Since the seventeenth century, citizenship has developed only as national citizenship. Only the nation-state has provided an arena where citizens act as citizens, and thus only the nation-state has acted to protect citizens' rights. Insofar as human rights as such ever receive protection, notwithstanding the existence of international governmental and nongovernmental organizations dedicated to this purpose, it is still primarily the nation-state which offers certain protection to noncitizens within its borders. Perhaps world citizenship will some day develop in a broad framework of international constitutional protections for human rights, but until that day citizens' rights within a constitutionally defined nation-state will remain the chief source of enforceable human rights.⁵³ Citizenship is not necessarily tied to national identity, though from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries this has been the case, and it remains difficult to conceive how world citizenship could retain any sense of community, homogeneity, and participation.

Unlike Liu Shipei, most Chinese intellectuals in the late Qing tried to build a sense of citizenship tied explicitly to the nation, itself conceived in terms of a historical narrative that essentialized ethnic and cultural identity.⁵⁴ It was Liang Qichao who taught an entire generation that nation and citizenship were inextricably mixed in the form of the state. Moreover, the Qing government's own reforms tended to produce "schools for citizenship" in its last decade, especially after 1905.⁵⁵ Local and provincial elections began to occur in 1909, and this of course required defining the right to vote. Men who met certain educational or property requirements became "citizens" in the specific legal sense of suffrage. Citizenship was thus not limited to a radical or intellectual fringe but was intrinsic to the discourse on modernization and state building. Conservatives might deprecate discussion of democracy and popular power (*minquan*), but they too were searching for ways to incorporate the people into the state. As a high Qing

official and as head of the Republic of China after the Revolution of 1911, Yuan Shikai attempted to rule through a top-down, centralized bureaucracy. However, even Yuan acknowledged the legitimacy of popular sovereignty. If it can be shown that a conservative modernizer like Yuan had accepted a notion of citizenship, then it should be clear that the basis of the state had been transformed between the late Qing reforms and the new Republic.

As the Qing state faltered in the early 1900s under foreign and domestic pressures and as the very survival of the Chinese people seemed threatened, Liang Qichao worked to create an active citizenry. In the wake of the debacle of 1898, his thought turned more radical and in 1902 he began writing his serial essay *The New People* (*Xinminshuo*).⁵⁶ Unlike Aristotle, Liang did not treat the play of political activity as the highest good in itself. By this time, Liang clearly felt that the highest good lay in the survival and strengthening of the nation. Yet, as Xiaobing Tang notes, Liang's "new citizen is expected to be a member of the world and the nation simultaneously . . . a global imaginary of identity underlay the discourse of nationalism."⁵⁷ What Liang shared with the Aristotelian tradition was a communitarian and ethical orientation toward citizenship: citizens were to be integrated into the political community like parts in a whole, individual identity was to stem from the interplay of social traditions and institutions. Liang conceived of politics as a mutual, not an individual, activity—its morality stemming from its mutuality and egalitarianism.

This is not to deny the elitism of Liang's reform program. Liang taught an entire generation that "China" had a history (which he modeled on European histories) progressing from primeval beginnings through ancient, medieval, and modern stages. The need to "preserve the nation" led Liang to an appreciation of a citizenship which emphasized the public good. The public good involved state building, which in turn required the leadership of a progressive elite to usher the masses out of ignorance and superstition: to educate them in citizenship. Education was to play a critical role in training the future citizens in public-mindedness, devotion to comrades, and respect for tradition and institutions. Liang's antidespotism and anti-imperialism did not lead to full-fledged individualism, but he nonetheless emphasized the moral autonomy of the "citizen" or "new person" (*xinmin*). He used the term *xinmin* to refer both to renewal of the people and to a new citizenry. The renewal of the people, meaning essentially their moral rectification, was of course a central Confucian value, explicitly expressed in the *Great Learning* (*Daxue*), an ancient text made a basic part of the educational curriculum by Zhu Xi (1130–1200). Liang self-consciously drew on this tradition as he reconceptualized the political role of the people, but he also went considerably beyond it. One sign of new ways of thinking was the emergence of a new vocabulary. Liang's use of the term *guomin* to describe "citizenry" represented a logical evolution of a term which had previously simply referred to the "people of the kingdom" or "the people." That Liang did indeed mean to refer to a citizenry and not merely the nation, the folk, or common people is clear from

the context of his remarks on popular sovereignty and participation. Nonetheless, it is also true that terms remained in flux for some time. Terms later and more properly used for “citizen” like *gongmin* (public persons) and *shimin* (urban or “city” persons) were still seldom used in the late Qing. The neologism *guomin* in effect straddled the distinction between a mere “national” and a full-fledged “citizen.”

Liang’s consistent interest in education and character molding reflected his fears that the Chinese people or folk might not be capable of the historical task they faced. Elite-led and orderly reforms were to create the new Chinese nation-state, but the foundations of a modern state ultimately rested on a self-renovated citizenry. Artificial standards of behavior imposed from without would simply continue the traditional despotism in new forms; the people of the nation must become aware of their own responsibilities. Insofar as Liang called for “liberty” (*ziyou*), it was rooted in the sense of self-determination and autonomy. Free nations depended on free people; only such a people could resist foreign encroachments and avoid extinction as an identifiable group. It is at least heuristically useful to distinguish between the public and private realms in Liang’s political thought at this point, but it should be remembered that an amorphous quality like *ziyou* was relevant to both; indeed, “citizenship” almost inevitably linked private and public virtues.⁵⁸

“Public morality” (*gongde*) Liang defined in terms of its ability to strengthen group cohesion, while “personal morality” (*side*) concerned the means of creating individuals of use to the group.⁵⁹ He condemned the Confucian tradition for emphasizing personal morality at the expense of public.⁶⁰ And he condemned the tendency of fragmentation in Chinese society; the Chinese needed to find a basis of social and political unity hitherto lacking. Liang had no use for absolute values or universal ideals of international harmony or a stateless future.⁶¹ He thus rejected as impractical both the anarchists’ vision of human rights as such and his teacher Kang Youwei’s Great Community (*datong*) utopia of the future. Liang accepted the social Darwinian vision of ruthless competition, which he took as operating primarily at the level of nations,⁶² although he seems to have assumed that national competition would result in a dynamic system of autonomous and free states—rather like the citizens of a country—rather than the domination of the many by the one victor. Since grouping was natural to humanity, “public morality” revolved around group interests. Liang drew a clear distinction between the modern nation and the traditional state. Nations were not chance collections of individuals, families, or tribes but were composed of a people (*minzu*) which, in modern times, had to become a citizenry (*guomin*):

When a nation can stand up in the world, its citizenry (*guomin*) must necessarily possess a unique character. From morality and laws to customs and habits, literature and aesthetics, these all possess a certain unique spirit. When the ancestors pass them down and the descendants receive them, then the

group (*qun*) is united and a nation-state (*guo*) is formed. This is truly the basic wellspring of nationalism (*minzu zhuyi*). . . .

In ancient times, we Chinese were people of villages instead of citizens. This is not because we were unable to form a citizenry but due to circumstances. Since China majestically used to be the predominant power in the East, surrounded as we were by small barbarian groups and lacking any contact with other large states, we Chinese generally considered our state to encompass the whole world. All the messages we received, all that influenced our minds, all the instructions of our sages, and all that our ancestors passed down qualified us to be individuals on our own, family members, members of localities and clans, and members of the world. But they did not qualify us to be citizens of a state. Although the qualifications of citizenship are not necessarily much superior to these other characteristics, in an age of struggle among nations for the survival of the fittest while the weak perish, if the qualities of citizens are wanting, then the nation cannot stand up independently between Heaven and Earth.⁶³

China, in Liang's analysis, was facing unprecedented imperialist pressures which were rooted not in traditional state powers like the Roman Empire but in nationalistic expansions of whole peoples, exemplified by British control over a quarter of the earth. This national imperialism (*minzu diguo zhuyi*) was grounded in popular support for economic expansion. The only way victims of this imperialism like China could resist was through mobilizing their populations just as their enemies had. The traditional view of the dynastic state as stemming from (if not, indeed, belonging to) the emperor was thus inadequate. Liang's concept of the citizenry was based not only on the pragmatic realization that if the people were going to be mobilized they needed to feel that the state belonged to them (popular sovereignty), but also on his sense that a national community by its very nature had to involve the people as both rulers and ruled. For all of Liang's elitism, he linked the principle of popular sovereignty to the practice of political participation. Democratization was thus at this point a key part of Liang's "renovation of the people." He did not think that democratization would automatically resolve individual and group interests into a seamless collective will, though he did not directly confront the problem of competing interests, either. Rather, he seems to have assumed that since grouping (*qun*) was natural, nations were natural; the proper education of the people would produce a cohesive citizenry.

Citizenship thus involved for Liang active voluntarism and dynamism (*dong*). As Xiaobing Tang notes, Liang's modernist faith in progressive time led him to conclude that renewal implied historical consciousness applied to the world stage.⁶⁴ Liang criticized what he saw as traditional fatalism in contrast to effort, perseverance, and the "aggressive and adventurous spirit" he ascribed to the West. The renovated people would possess courage, zeal, and adventurousness. As individuals, they would exercise rights and fulfill duties—activities which applied to the public realm and were rooted in the group. Liang certainly did not condemn all selfishness as long as individual behavior did not weaken the group

as a whole. His Confucian faith that all humanity was capable of acting morally allowed him to build a foundation for the group which rested on the extension of individual self-love to love for others. But moving beyond Confucianism, Liang believed that outside the private realm of family, individuals had to act as citizens or members of the state. In a passage that almost seems to be echoing Rousseau, Liang commented:

The citizenry (*guomin*) is an assemblage of individual persons. The claims of the state (*guoquan*) are composed of the rights (*quanli*) of individuals. Therefore, the thoughts, feelings, and actions of a citizenry will never be obtainable without the thoughts, feelings, and actions of each individual member. That the people (*min*) is strong means that the state is strong; that the people is weak means that state is weak; that the people is rich means that the state is rich; that the people is poor means that the state is poor; that the people possesses rights means that the state possesses rights; and that the people is without shame means that the state is without shame.⁶⁵

In 1902 Kang Youwei had also produced an ambitious definition of citizenship. In his “Citizen Self-government” Kang was chiefly concerned with the resuscitation of the political life of a state whose members were completely alienated from it.⁶⁶ Like Liang, Kang supported gradual and elitist reform over revolution, promoting the establishment of self-government organs at various levels of society. His analysis of China’s weakness led him to the following definition of citizenship:

Why is it that all of the Western nations, similarly from France to America, tend toward wealth and power? It is because they all regard the people as the basis of national culture. Since all the people have the right to participate in assemblies and they all have the responsibility to be concerned about their country, they are called citizens (*gongmin*). All the people regard the country as their own family, and they are all involved, whether there is loss or gain, whether the times are good or bad. Although the members of a family may be young or old, humble or reputable, when there are problems they will still come together to deal with the problems and go through the difficulties for mutual benefit.⁶⁷

Again, citizenship revolves around membership in the nation as one’s primary identity in the tradition of republican participation. The family for Kang was no longer a basis of the state but a mere metaphor of identity. In 1904, the year Liang completed his series on renewing the people, the radical intellectual Lin Xie tried to link citizenship to race more explicitly. He traced the origins of the Chinese people to a tribe from the Pamirs—an ethnographic theory popular at the time—from which he derived the Chinese term for “common people” (*bai-xing*).⁶⁸ Over time, however, as the despotic imperial system developed, “commoner” status came to signify servility. Perhaps to Lin, political degeneration

represented the loss of racial purity. Yet the highest human status came only through identification with the state; racial purity might be a necessary condition (Lin is not specific on this), but it is certainly not a sufficient condition for citizenship. Lin derived the contemporary term for citizens (*guomin*) from the first organized societies, composed of “peoples” (*renmin*).

People (*renmin*) originally lacked a specific place, but later everyone occupied national territories, gathering together many people of the same race and living within such national territories. Each person understood how to put in order the whole country and how to get in touch with local groups. Everyone was spirited, vigorous, knowledgeable—and so able to preserve their national territories steadfastly and carry out domestic political affairs completely. Thus they are proud to be the people of a nation, and we call this kind of people a “citizenry” (*guomin*). “Humans” are a level above beasts, “peoples” are another level above “humans,” and when “peoples” advance to the point of becoming “citizens,” they occupy the supreme position. There is nothing higher.⁶⁹

Despite a certain tone of golden age nostalgia, Lin’s goal was to outline a path to the future. The next year another revolutionary pushed Lin’s ideas further in an influential essay on nation, race, and citizenship. Wang Jingwei’s 1905 “Citizens of the Nation” primarily sought to base a Chinese state on the putatively racial category of the Han, who were in danger of being swallowed by Manchus.⁷⁰ However, Wang also shared Liang’s intense concern with a strong citizenry, and in that sense racial nationalism was far from his only concern. His objections to the Manchus were not purely based on their putative cruelty and rapaciousness as a race, but he also argued that a ruling minority inevitably weakened the state. Although Wang felt that a state comprising of a single race was stronger than a multiracial state, he recognized the existence of such states. Either way, a strong race was a necessary (but still not sufficient) condition for creating a strong nation, which needed a strong citizenry. However, the point here is that Wang analytically separated the racial question from the form of the state, which was a legal and political category. Notwithstanding his racialist stance, Wang treated citizens as the “constituting elements” of the state (*guojia*). Legally citizens were persons subject to the basic law of the state (*guofa*); individually, they possessed independence and liberty, while in terms of their relationship to the state they had rights and duties. Wang believed that only in a constitutional state could citizens exist, since under despotism people lacked legal standing.⁷¹

Wang further stated that the citizenry “was united in liberty, equality, and universal affection”—the spirit behind the basic law of the state, which is “the general will of the citizenry.”⁷² The government was simply the agent of the basic law, and under a constitutional order the state and the individual citizen each possessed rights and duties in regard to one another. For Wang, citizenship, like race, possessed revolutionary import. Consciousness of citizenship and ra-

cial differences would enable the Chinese people to overthrow a despotism rooted both in China's long history and in the minority rule of a conquering race. As such, citizenship signaled historical advance over a barbarous past.

Both Liang's "new people" and Wang's "racial citizens" were thus members of a constitutional order in contradistinction to subjects of a despotic order. Late Qing activists called for a legally binding, written document that would establish and thereby limit the state; the Qing government itself promised in 1905 that it would begin work on a constitution, though it regarded such a document as a codification of existing governmental powers rather than the basis of its legitimacy. Nonetheless, this moment represents the culmination of a long period of reformist agitation; the failure of the Qing to pursue constitutionalism more vigorously was a major factor in its demise in the 1911 Revolution. The story of the reform movement is well known. The first proposals to establish a parliament had emerged in the 1880s—but from men who, however familiar with Western institutions from personal experience in Hong Kong and Europe, could not command much attention from the Chinese elite. Parliaments were first discussed not in terms of constitutional devices to separate the state from the ruler, much less to limit the powers of government, but as a means of encouraging "communication" between the people and the ruler.

Yet the idea was still shocking. It may well be that "mainstream" elite opinion remained considerably more conservative throughout the late Qing than is sometimes appreciated. However, conservatism was definitely in retreat. What was shocking in one decade was accepted by the next and passé by the third. Mainstream opinion was in flux and unusually open to radical ideas, at least giving them a hearing. Thus during the 1890s Kang Youwei was able to bring fundamental institutional reform (*bianfa*) from the fringes of the intellectual scene to the center of political power. Kang's belief in constitutionalism justified the reforms which the Guangxu emperor began to put into effect in 1898. The Manchu clan leaders and prominent Han Chinese officials who had supported moderate self-strengthening measures, however, turned against what they saw as a radical transformation of the polity.

But by this time a significant segment of the traditional gentry-literati class had emerged as an intelligentsia associated with such modern institutions as journalism, study societies, schools, and a range of professions and businesses. With the failure of the 1898 reforms, the radical movement split into competing revolutionary and constitutionalist camps. The "constitutionalists" (*lixianpai*) favored retention of the Qing in order to avoid the perils of revolutionary chaos but wanted the dynasty to become a genuinely constitutional monarchy, while the revolutionaries (*gemingpai*) favored expulsion of the Manchus and establishment of a republic.⁷³ Both groups, however, operated from a generally similar set of basic assumptions which were quite radical from the angle of traditional political values, precisely because they both favored government by constitution and popular sovereignty of some kind.

One of the earliest and most philosophically complete critiques of despotism was that of Tan Sitong, whose 1898 *Renxue* (On benevolence) was posthumously published after he had become a martyr to the cause of reform.⁷⁴ Tan foreshadowed the revolutionaries by linking disdain for the monarchy with harsh criticisms of the Manchus. Both Tan and Liang Qichao praised the seventeenth-century philosopher Huang Zongxi, secretly printing thousands of copies of Huang's banned *Mingyi daifanglu*.⁷⁵ Huang provided a link with the Chinese tradition important for Liang and even Tan. Yet Huang had not attacked the ultimate origins of the kingship as "theft" and "oppression," nor had he called for democracy.⁷⁶ The radical constitutionalists of the last years of the nineteenth century were calling for government by—as well as for—the people. Their critique of despotism resulted in the complete intellectual demolition of the kingship itself. As anti-Manchuism spread after the turn of the century, the imperial institution no doubt suffered from its association with a "race" deemed inferior, barbarian, brutal, and so forth; however, attacks on despotism and praise for popular rights independent of racial issues were conducted with great vigor. If the Manchus sometimes made an easy target, radicals also confronted the evils of Han Chinese history.

The rise of public opinion also characterized late Qing radicalism.⁷⁷ It is true that the populism of the constitutionalist movement fell short of a complete rejection of traditional paternalism. The common people did not become participants in public discourse; however, constitutionalists made a real effort to educate the people, to draw them gradually into the political process, and to explain reforms to them, as well as to justify their actions to power holders. With the revolutionaries' glorification of certain aspects of popular culture, the people were being brought into the mainstream. Journalists wrote for an ever-growing audience of educated urban classes and townspeople—consisting of perhaps 2 to 4 million regular readers in the late Qing.⁷⁸ Popular concerns thus were brought into public and official discourse in an entirely unprecedented way—indeed, creating a new kind of public discourse.

In this context, it should not be surprising that calls for universal education, including schools for women, were heard increasingly after the mid-1890s. Liang Qichao, for one, firmly situated education of the people in the larger nation-building project. Education would enable the people to become citizens and play their full constitutional role. It is useless to ask whether the state existed for the people or the people for the state. The point remains that the nation was to be created on the basis of common culture, justice, and discipline.

Citizenship and the Revolution of 1911

New state rituals designed to celebrate the republic emerged as Yuan Shikai took power after the Revolution of 1911. The imperial abdication was celebrated by a holiday on the 12th of February. But it was "Double Ten"—October 10, the

anniversary of the Wuchang uprising—which soon became China’s national holiday. The Wuchang uprising had nothing to do with Yuan, but it did lead directly to the revolution and hence to the republic he headed. Yuan may well have preferred a February celebration, which would have commemorated his role in negotiating the abdication more particularly. However, the Double Ten holiday was popular in southern and central China. After being named provisional president originally, Yuan managed to have Parliament name him president in 1913, taking the oath of office on the 10th of October.⁷⁹ He presided over a lavish Double Ten celebration in 1914, arriving on horseback at Tian’anmen in Beijing and carried to the balcony in a red-cushion sedan chair.⁸⁰ Tian’anmen, the Gate of Heavenly Peace, which used to mark the entrance to the imperial city, thus became a republican civic monument, looking outward to the newly opened spaces of the wide boulevard and square below rather than inward to the palaces.⁸¹ A military review was followed by Yuan’s formally opening a museum to display art and relics from the old Qing palaces at Rehe and Mukden (Shenyang). The newspapers soon informed readers that they might tour parts of the old imperial city, formerly forbidden them.⁸²

Thus did Yuan attempt to instill what he saw as the values of the republic. A military review could reach out to a larger urban public, while the Qing was deliberately reduced to museum status. Yuan was achieving ritual as well as administrative dominance of the new state. He was doing so by symbolically but not substantively incorporating the people into the state. This was not the *minben* paternalism of Confucianism whereby imperial rituals marked *in private* the relationship between the emperor and heaven, his ancestors, and other spirits and never involved the populace. It was, instead, an acknowledgment of popular sovereignty even while it remained an expression of command. *Minben* was in effect replaced by *minguo*, as the emperor was replaced by the president—yet the bureaucratic hierarchy remained in place.

Modernity and the nation-state failed to link the new government to ultimate sources of power. Modernity and the nation-state could not sufficiently naturalize the new system of power. As early as the winter of 1913–14 Yuan floated plans to revive an imperial ceremony, the worship of Heaven at the winter solstice, as well as sacrifices to Earth in the summer and sacrifices to Confucius. Considerable debate naturally ensued, provoked especially by the fear that Yuan was intending to overturn the republic and make himself emperor. He denied this strenuously. The case publicly made for conducting the sacrifices was essentially instrumentalist: that the moral standards of the people had been declining since the revolution and that heaven and Confucius represented virtue in the popular imagination. Finding a more modern basis of morality was not yet practical. It was said that the few years of the republican era were racked by violence while *liyue* (the traditional Confucian “rites and music” of good government) were ignored. Yuan’s men argued that “although the president was different from the emperors, he is still in the end the leader of the state, representing the nation [or

“citizenry,” *guomin*] in modifying and performing the grand sacrifice.”⁸³ Yuan believed the populace expected this of him.

Yet even the worship of heaven, in Yuan’s hands, represented not continuity but a new definition of nation. Yuan proposed to update the ritual, to encourage the private worship of heaven and to mandate local government participation. No longer would the old empire’s most sacred ritual be a monopoly—though the president would stand as the exemplary and chief officiate.⁸⁴ In February 1914 Yuan ordered that the worship of Heaven be made general, and that all citizens (*guomin*) might conduct the appropriate rituals in their homes.⁸⁵ At the same time, Yuan emphasized that the president would represent the citizenry in his worship while local officials represented local people. In practice few if any private households sacrificed to heaven, though local officials, following orders, certainly did so. Thus did Yuan attempt to hierarchically unite the entire nation.

The result, however, was a distinct disappointment. The legitimacy crisis continued as Yuan failed to find a language that would appeal to the politically active, modernizing urban classes. He moved to make himself emperor in the summer of 1915, a plan which aroused nearly universal opposition and ultimately led to Yuan’s downfall. But even here, using all the traditional legitimating techniques and resources of the past, Yuan was actually trying to forge a modern rhetoric of nation and citizenship:

Representative Assembly would determine the national polity. Representatives from every province and district unanimously supported a constitutional monarchy. Since national sovereignty resides in the whole citizenry (*zhuquan benyu guomin quanti*), how can I dare to maintain my own opinion in contravention of the people’s will (*minxin*)? Heaven sees as the people see; Heaven hears as the people hear.⁸⁶ Heaven inevitably follows what the people want. According to historical texts, whether one follows or contravenes Heaven is extremely serious. One cannot see Heaven but one can see the people’s will.⁸⁷

Yuan thus mixed modern and traditional rhetoric in a travesty: there was in fact no popular movement to found a new dynasty whatsoever. Nonetheless, the argument is clearly rooted in the legitimacy of “citizenship” and popular sovereignty.

Ideals of citizenship as participation in the life of the nation also spread from the bottom up. Popular rebellion and riot as desperate acts of protest had been a perennial aspect of the traditional imperial state. Protest could take on an anti-imperialist thrust in the last years of the Qing, as with the Gelaohui uprisings in Sichuan in the 1890s and the Boxer uprising of 1900 in northern China. These were still episodes of popular violence rather than part of a larger claim to the right of political participation, however journalists sometimes used them to make such claims. Student and gentry petitions and demonstrations, such as Kang Youwei’s famous petition drive against the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895 or protests against government acquiescence to Russian meddling in Manchuria in 1902, came close to a conception of citizenship as participation. However, such

activities also represented traditional elite concerns. Although dynastic law limited the right to comment on political questions to government officials, court politics had long involved national and regional factions. Literati education was specifically designed to equip men to rule through moral discrimination, which effectively gave them the right to hold political opinions. As has long been noted, the modern Chinese intelligentsia “inherited” the literati’s responsibility for ordering the world. Thus the real break with the past came with the effort of exiled radicals and revolutionaries to appeal to popular groups like the “secret societies” and overseas merchant communities. The radicals needed money; as patriotic merchants contributed funds to causes ranging from “Protect the Emperor” (against the allegedly reactionary Empress Dowager) to revolution against the Manchus, they began to think in terms of national politics.

Inside China itself the 1905 boycott of American goods to protest U.S. immigration policies represented a student-merchant alliance. Although it did not leave an enduring organization, the boycott signaled the birth of mass politics. New social forces were making themselves felt in mostly non-violent ways. Public spaces became contested arenas of political expression. By the 1910s and 1920s, with most parts of China under weak government control, urban politics suddenly became open to public displays of grievances and demands.⁸⁸ Citizenship might well be linked to traditional economic rights (*minsheng*), but its more or less legitimate expression in the form of a host of voluntary associations was new. New institutions like the press served to give different classes a common set of assumptions. Obviously, there were limits to this process. The very weakness of governments meant that no autonomous public space could emerge within the structures of a stable state, and such growth of civil society as occurred found little expression in rural areas. Nevertheless, the opportunities grew in China’s cities for men—and women—of all classes to participate in urban politics in a context of national renewal. This was a fundamental sociopolitical process spanning the 1911 Revolution. In David Strand’s convincing analysis,

By the end of the twenties a substantial proportion of city people in China had reached a level of political consciousness commensurate with their formal status as citizens of a republic. Merchants, workers, students, women, suburban farmers, and assorted professionals entered citywide associations and unions, poised for eventual integration into nationwide systems.⁸⁹

One may add that even in some parts of the vast countryside a nationally minded and progressive rural intelligentsia was beginning to emerge, composed of schoolteachers, younger reform-minded landlords, students, and the like.

Outline of This Work

Several of the chapters in this volume originated at the 1993 meetings of the International Congress of Asian and North African Studies in Hong Kong, from

a series of panels dealing with civil society. Probably enough work has been done on civil society in Asia for the time being (with several volumes still being planned or in press); nonetheless, an intriguing related theme raised by a number of the papers was the question of citizenship. Several other essays were then solicited by the editors in order to round out new work on the subject. The authors include scholars working in China, Japan, Taiwan, Europe, and the United States.

Liu Zehua and Liu Jianqing present an overview of the political and cultural attributes of citizenship between the 1890s and the 1920s, especially as seen in the fate of civic associations and political parties. They emphasize that citizenship could not have emerged in China, which exalted imperial power, without the arrival of the West to serve as goad and model. The radical reformers who emerged from China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 began to abandon belief in the emperor and formed real civic associations, while the revolutionaries created China's first real political party, the Tongmenghui. The early republic briefly saw a flourishing system of party politics; though only a minority of the population was involved, real elections occurred. On the other hand, "citizenship consciousness" was still weak even among the urban elites, and republican politics was easily suppressed by Yuan Shikai. The May Fourth era saw extensive dissatisfaction with politics and parties. Chen Duxiu's attack on Confucian morality as the foundation of despotism was a progressive step in creating autonomous citizens. And the May Fourth movement itself linked students, workers, and merchants through new, national organizations in ways that raised the political consciousness and autonomy of all three groups. Yet even today, the authors conclude, a multiplicity of parties and civic associations is necessary before real citizenship can be created in China.

One helpful approach to the old question of how Western ideas were adopted or how the West "influenced" China is to look at the precise evolution of ongoing Chinese discourses.⁹⁰ Anne Cheng examines the reemergence of the Han dynasty Old Text/New Text controversy in the nineteenth century, concluding that the New Text revival demonstrated the limits of Confucian reformism. Arising as a scholarly and cultural movement, the New Text school had reformist political implications from the beginning. The radical potential of the New Text school was rooted not only in its conception of Confucius as the sage-founder of new institutions but also in its image of the emperor as charismatic and ultimately free from history. As well, the New Text school rediscovered the flexible Han synthesis of law and ritual—linked to the statecraft tradition of practical reforms, this revived the political consciousness of many scholars as the Qing dynasty faltered. Kang Youwei justified radical and comprehensive reform, but after the failures of 1898, the New Text school rapidly dissolved. It was, in fact, Old Text thinkers such as Zhang Binglin and Liu Shipei who had the capacity to challenge the entire scriptural tradition, abandon Confucianism, and turn to political revolution. The New Text school created a Chinese nationalism based on a

cultural definition of political status, but it remained wedded to a universal vision rooted in a Confucian conception of imperial power. For all its reformism, its mysticism left no room for the construction of citizenship.

On the other hand, Ingo Schäfer shows that the eclectic late Qing thinker Tan Sitong came suddenly to support popular sovereignty and democracy after previously holding quite conservative views. Tan condemned the emperors for breaking the connection between humanity and the cosmos which he saw operating in a kind of golden age, he condemned the Manchus as especially despotic, and he condemned Confucianism (though not Confucius) for legitimating coercion through the three bonds. Largely basing his ideas on Buddhist premises, Tan took equality to imply the erasing of differences and liberty to imply a sense of individual autonomy—but only as egos were connected to one another through the Mind. Tan imagined a utopia of free and equal citizens. Nonetheless, his views toward the people of his own day remained ambivalent. He certainly encouraged all kinds of political associations (from gentry study societies to monks' groups) and alliances between them, but he was also skeptical of the capacity of the people for immediate self-rule.

If citizenship indeed needs a national community in which to flourish, it is significant that Murata Yūjirō credits Kang Youwei with creating the latter by replacing concern for the dynasty with concern for the nation as defined by the linkage of land, people, and religion. Changes in the social order underlay the ideas of such men as Kang, Liang Qichao, and Yan Fu about the importance of the people in determining the fate of the nation-state. The rise of local elites and managers led to a movement favoring local autonomy while the old, amorphous literati elite was being replaced by professional specialization just as the national press was creating a new sense of unity. Associations such as study societies were locally rooted even when their members' concerns transcended locality. Clashes between gentry and officials led the gentry to a new sense of identification with the people and encouraged demands for public opinion and political participation. The sprouts of a civil society were being formed even while those who favored local autonomy sought a strong state.

The theme of public opinion provides the focus for Joan Judge's study of late Qing journalists, who saw themselves on the front lines of the fight to turn the shapeless common people of today into the urgently needed citizens of tomorrow. The writers of *Shibao*, a popular and influential Shanghai daily newspaper, often used the term "public opinion" to refer to their own opinion, or more broadly, that of progressive urban elites rather than actually giving the common people voices of their own. However, the journalists were beginning to shed the paternalistic attitudes of older elites and made a genuine effort not only to educate the people (which meant, in the context of the times, to explain reformist projects such as new schools to them) but also to explain and justify the common people to government and social leaders (even coming close to sanctioning uprisings through detailed examination of the harsh conditions which provoked

them). The invention of the modern press created a new audience for opinion and information, and publicity thereby became a potent political factor. By no means were Chinese intellectuals such as the journalists Judge examines divorced from the common people or from rural concerns, as is sometimes charged.⁹¹ Indeed, the journalists actively contributed to national consciousness and a certain solidarity across class lines.

Focusing on civic associations and political parties, Don Price finds a “civil society discourse” from the turn of the century to the 1911 Revolution, but concludes that the perceived need for a strong state tended to diminish the role of the citizen. Chinese intellectuals still favored a democratic system dominated by political parties, but some of their earlier optimism about a strong civil society had evaporated by the end of the Qing. Price examines the writings of a variety of intellectuals to determine that for all of the issues dividing them, a clear evolution occurred from fear of an oppressive state and faith in free associations to faith in a stronger state and a more nuanced discussion of constitutionalism, political parties, and the applicability of Western models.

Ma Xiaoquan traces the local self-government movement to the rise of a new bourgeoisie composed of gentry and merchants who supported political modernization. The movement ultimately failed, but it aided social mobility and enlarged political and social participation. The new social forces were too weak to create a movement that could truly claim independence from the Qing government, and after the 1911 Revolution Yuan Shikai was able to abolish local self-government. Nonetheless, many intellectuals and gentry activists, inspired by the West and Meiji Japan, saw local self-government as a key element in mobilizing popular support for national reforms. By the 1890s local self-government seemed to offer a way to encourage experiments in democracy without threatening national order. It was also linked to the promotion of industry and local infrastructure. The Qing itself encouraged local self-government, and the movement can best be seen as simultaneously promoted from above and below. Local self-government offered a partial but genuine avenue for the development of Chinese citizenship.

The analytical terminology used by Ma, and to some extent by Liu Zehua and Liu Jianqing, will jar on the ears of many Western readers. It should be remembered that “feudalism” in this context refers to a society dominated by gentry landlords; the strength of the state (the imperial government) waned and waxed but remained under landlord influence. Thus “feudalism” here does not refer to societies dominated by elites who were structured in lord-vassal bonds—the definition commonly accepted in the West but rejected by many Japanese as well as Chinese historians. Much of Ma’s argument rests on the premise that a new kind of combination gentry-capitalist class arose in the late Qing—a view which largely conforms to contemporary Western scholarship, though the “national bourgeoisie” he mentions is regarded by most Western scholars as a chimera.⁹² Nonetheless, it seems useful to delineate bourgeois influences on the 1911 Revolution.

From very different angles the notion of civil society informs the essays by Michael Tsin and Peter Zarrow. In examining late Qing political culture, especially in Guangzhou, Tsin finds “civil society” to be a misleading analytical tool, while Zarrow finds it useful in his study of the thought of Liang Qichao in the 1910s. Tsin points out that “civil society” distracts attention from society, ignores the real connections between civic associations and the state, and implies a false teleology. China did not try and fail to create some kind of utopian civil society; rather, various attempts to define society were part of a complex process of disciplining a citizenry, emancipating a people, and securing power. Tsin focuses on how the nationalist discourse shaped the emergence of “society” (and was shaped by it) as civic organizations rearticulated their roles vis-à-vis the state by remapping society. In the case of Guangzhou, civic associations are best seen as part of the reinvention of the state. They legitimated the state precisely as they represented—and so acted to redefine—society. After the 1911 Revolution intellectuals of all stripes turned to class analysis to understand and control society. Both the Guomindang and the Communist Party tried to remap society through a class analysis which would give them techniques of mobilization and ultimately ways to demarcate citizens and masses.

Zarrow, on the other hand, believes that the notion of “civil society” provides a useful way to classify Liang Qichao’s political views after the 1911 Revolution. Although Liang did not use the term, it fairly describes the new intellectual synthesis he formed in the wake of the early political failures of the republic and Yuan Shikai’s monarchical movement. Repeated legitimacy crises in the early republic brought Liang to view his previous emphasis on building up state powers without giving much thought to the social roots of government as impractical and dangerous. Liang defended an elitist version of republicanism which included both a realm of “formal democracy” with a limited franchise *and* a social realm containing voluntary groups. The law and stable institutions were important to Liang, and he tried to encourage a middle ground dominated neither by state nor society but produced by both. He thus called for a politics framed by the “rules of the game”: basic freedom of speech, restraints on government or basic constitutionalism, and the education of the people by the state and elites. He tried to present himself as the model of the citizen: rational and disinterested.

In the final essay, Wang Fan-shen examines how Chinese intellectuals from the late Qing to the early republic tried to mobilize the strength of the people without engendering chaos. In the transition from a concern with grouping (*qun*) to society (*shehui*), certain intellectuals moved to relate citizenship to social revolution. In the late Qing, grouping was infused with moral significance; Liang Qichao, among others, saw it as a corrective for the genuine but limited individual morality of the Confucian tradition. Wang notes that “grouping” remained an ambiguous concept, open to fairly conservative, or at least gradualist, understandings, as well as radical interpretations. “Society” was used in an overlapping way to emphasize the interconnectedness of the group’s members as parts

of an overarching social organism with a life of its own. By the time of the New Culture and May Fourth movements, radical intellectuals completely rejected traditional associations, from clans to guilds, concluding that China lacked "society." Fu Sinian, for one, spoke of the need to "create society" since centuries of autocracy had left China without one. Fu defined society in terms of the cohesion of responsible individuals to build a true republic. Wang concludes with an analysis of the early thought of Mao Zedong, who originally believed that national unity had to be built from the bottom up though he later seems to have built up the state at the expense of society.

In sum, as Joshua A. Fogel's "Afterword" makes clear, a wide variety of historical issues emerge from these papers: nationalism; democracy; the relationships between classes; the relationships among state, individual, and various groups; public opinion; local self-government; the emergence of new classes, especially modern intellectuals; and Confucian and Western influences among them. These are not topics new to the study of Chinese history. It is hoped, however, that this volume will add to our knowledge of modern China with new perspectives and information. Most of the essays here combine examination of well-known figures and phenomena with information on ideas and events which are less discussed in contemporary historiography. For all of the common themes among the essays, the editors have made no attempt to impose a standardization of terms or translations on individual authors; and each essay develops its own logic. Overall, the chapters combine social and intellectual history, discuss local and national events, and freely cross the 1911 dividing line. Only a few offer a theoretical analysis of citizenship, but they are all concerned with questions of national identity, political participation, and power. In this way, Chinese history may help efforts to theorize citizenship in a less Eurocentric fashion than has hitherto been the case.

Notes

I would like to thank Stephen Angle, Jiwei Ci, Paul Conkin, Joshua Fogel, Joan Judge, Michael Tsin, and Michael Walzer for suggesting improvements to earlier drafts of this Introduction, though responsibility for remaining errors and incoherencies remains mine. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

1. That the people (*min*) are the basis (*ben*) of the state and form one of the pillars of the Confucian theory of a just society is clear enough, but if such views brought Confucians to challenge on occasion the hegemonic role of the kingship, they still did not attack the political and social hierarchy captured in the five relationships (emperor-subject, parent-child, husband-wife, older-younger brother, friends) or the politically passive nature of the people.

2. I use the term "imperial Confucianism" loosely to refer to the orthodox views sanctioned and fostered by the throne.

3. Compared to other political concepts, such as nationalism or constitutionalism, citizenship is "under-theorized," especially in regard to the questions of what historical conditions tend to foster it. See Bryan S. Turner, "Preface," p. viii in Bryan Turner, ed., *Citizenship and Social Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 1993).

4. The issue of Chinese identity has naturally preoccupied historians. The most sophisticated treatment of the modern period is Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), esp. pp. 7–16 and 51–65; see also Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1992). For the pre-modern period, see Rolf Trauzettel, “Sung Patriotism as a First Step Toward Chinese Nationalism,” pp. 199–212 in John Winthrop Haeger, ed., *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1975). China historically lacked “nationalism” in the modern sense of a state composed of a “people” and contending for power in an international system of nation-states; furthermore, mainstream Chinese thought was historically predisposed to “culturalism,” or a sense of center and periphery largely defined by cultural characteristics, especially mastery of high Confucian culture and ritual practice, rather than ethnic characteristics. Nonetheless, a loose sense of Chinese identity was pervasive in at least the late imperial era.

5. Neither did the West clearly separate the state from the ruler until the sixteenth century, according to Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), vol. 2, p. 351. A sense of the state was a key ingredient in the reemergence of citizenship in the early-modern period.

6. The significance of “public morality” is further discussed below; the point here is that it is not definable purely in terms of Western influences or “indigenous ideas” but was an outgrowth of a multilayered hermeneutics. In somewhat different terms, the issue is discussed explicitly in Stephen Charles Angle, “Concepts in Context: A Study of Ethical Incommensurability” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1994), pp. 93–103, 173–179. This paragraph is adapted from my “Citizenship and Human Rights in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Thought: Liu Shipei and Liang Qichao,” in Wm. Theodore de Bary and Tu Wei-ming, eds., *Confucianism and Human Rights*, copyright © 1997 by Columbia University Press. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

7. For recent Chinese interest in the history of democracy, see inter alia Xiong Yuezhi, *Zhongguo jindai minzhu sixiangshi* (History of democratic thought in modern China), (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1987); Feng Tianyu, “Minben xueshou: Zhongguo chuantong wenhua yu minzhu zhuyi de jiehedian” (The intersection of Chinese traditional culture and democracy), *Jianghan luntan*, September 1988, pp. 61–65; Huang Kewu, “Qingmo Minchu de minzhu sixiang: yi yi yu yuanyuan” (Democratic thought in the late Qing and early Republic: its significance and origins), pp. 363–398 in *Zhongguo xiandaihua lunwenji* (Essays on modernization in China) (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, 1991); Lin Qiyan, *Buxiang minzhu: Zhongguo zhishi fenzi yu jindai minzhu sixiang* (Marching toward democracy: Chinese intellectuals and modern democratic thought), (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1989); and Peter Zarrow, “Citizenship and Human Rights in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Thought,” in Wm. Theodore de Bary and Tu Wei-ming, eds., *Confucianism and Human Rights* (Columbia University Press, 1997).

8. Obviously, other important tensions existed, such as between centralization (*jun-xian*) and localism (*fengjian*), but in my view this debate was fairly attenuated by late imperial times and was, in any case, partly subsumed in the literati-emperor tension.

9. The original idea of the “community compact” was to foster local consensus and mutual assistance under a paternalistic elite that would minimize the need for state control. It degenerated by Qing times to the ritualistic and bureaucratic reading of the Sacred Edict—top-down orders from the emperor to the little people.

10. See Stephen Charles Angle, “Concepts in Context,” pp. 93–103, 173–179.

11. It may be that the key difference between Liang’s morality and traditional Confucian morality is not that Liang is any more “neutral,” “political,” or “rational,” but that he

has a more relativistic or instrumentalist approach to moral questions and no longer links them directly to metaphysical doctrines. Liang's ideas are further discussed below.

12. See *inter alia* Bryan S. Turner, ed., *Citizenship and Social Theory*; Roberto Alejandro, *Hermeneutics, Citizenship, and the Public Sphere* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); Bart van Steenbergen, ed., *The Condition of Citizenship* (London: Sage Publications, 1994); Ronald Beiner, ed., *Theorizing Citizenship* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); and the issue on "Cities and Citizenship," James Holston, guest ed., *Public Culture* 8, no. 2 (Winter 1996).

13. See Barbara Crossette, "Citizenship Is a Malleable Concept," *New York Times*, 18 August 1996, section 4, p. 3.

14. Ronald Beiner, "Introduction," pp. 1-2 in Ronald Beiner, ed. *Theorizing Citizenship*.

15. James Holston and Arjun Appadurai, "Cities and Citizenship," *Public Culture* 8.2 (Winter 1996), p. 189.

16. Roberto Alejandro, *Hermeneutics, Citizenship, and the Public Sphere*, p. 39.

17. See J.G.A. Pocock, "The Ideal of Citizenship Since Classical Times," in Ronald Beiner, ed., *Theorizing Citizenship*, pp. 45-52.

18. T.H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950).

19. Michael Ignatieff, "The Myth of Citizenship," in Ronald Beiner, ed., *Theorizing Citizenship*, p. 55.

20. For the centrality of membership, see Michael Walzer, "Citizenship," pp. 221-219 in Terence Bell, James Farn, and Russell L. Hanson, eds., *Political Innovation and Cultural Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). The definition, of course, predetermines the modernity of citizenship by associating it with the nation-state, itself a product of modernity; self-sacrifice refers not only to the taxes citizens pay today but especially to the citizen-soldier. Walzer emphasizes the Jacobin ideology of citizenship revolving around the public life.

21. Bryan S. Turner, "Contemporary Problems in the Theory of Citizenship," in Bryan Turner, ed., *Citizenship and Social Theory*, p. 2.

22. In Solonic Athens, where citizenship was codified for the first time, the classification of citizens into four groups based on wealth determined access to certain types of political positions, while in Rome the exact privileges of the plebeian citizens varied over time. Still, it seems that citizenship constituted the main source of identity for the patriarchs of Athens, situating them vis-à-vis slaves and metics (resident aliens). Roman citizenship under the empire formed a more partial identity, important only on occasion. It is largely the Roman form of citizenship which has spread in modern times—a form of citizenship which tends to emphasize equality under the law. It may be perfectly accurate to say that French women were denied (full) citizenship after the French Revolution or that American blacks were denied full citizenship in the 1940s, but it also remains true that each group was, in fact, regarded as members, if "degraded" members, of a national and political community in a way impossible in premodern states.

23. James Holston and Arjun Appadurai, "Cities and Citizenship," p. 190. In the advanced democracies, the right to vote remains an important ritual of formal citizenship; however, many of the marks of citizenship are perceived as onerous: jury duty, military service, and the like.

24. Peter Reisenberg, *Citizenship in the Western Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

25. These are, of course, broad generalizations. Passive citizenry did not originate with the invention of television: the citizens of the Roman Empire must be regarded as largely passive, a matter of receiving specific entitlements. Nor has admiration for physical and martial qualities disappeared. By noting that citizenship was hardly coterminous

with democracy, I mean not only that the large majority of residents of the ancient polis were not citizens but also that the political life of the polis—that is to say, citizenship and participation—remained alive even when the polis was (partly) subsumed in a large structure such as the Roman Empire or, later, the Holy Roman Empire.

26. This paragraph is largely informed by J.G.A. Pocock, “Ideal of Citizenship.” See also Paul A. Rahe, “The Primacy of Politics in Classical Greece, *American Historical Review* 89.2 (April 1984), pp. 265–293.

27. Michael Walzer, “Citizenship,” p. 215.

28. Peter Reisenberg, *Citizenship in the Western Tradition*, pp. 212–218. Roman law was, of course, a direct influence, as was Aristotle, in encouraging the view of subject as citizen.

29. Peter Reisenberg, *Citizenship in the Western Tradition*, p. 237. Reisenberg traces the linkage back to Calvinist trends of the sixteenth century, whence it fed into the stream of revolution.

30. J.G.A. Pocock, “Ideal of Citizenship,” p. 49.

31. Judith N. Shklar, *Men and Citizens: A Study of Rousseau’s Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

32. Joshua A. Fogel, *Nakae Ushikichi in China: The Mourning of Spirit* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, 1989), pp. 13–14, 234.

33. Pierre Rétat, “The Evolution of the Citizen from the Ancien Régime to the Revolution,” pp. 3–15 in Renee Waldinger, Philip Dawson, and Isser Woloch, eds., *The French Revolution and the Meaning of Citizenship* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993).

34. Michael P. Fitzsimmons, “The National Assembly and the Invention of Citizenship,” in Renee Waldinger et al. eds., *The French Revolution and the Meaning of Citizenship*, p. 32.

35. Michael Walzer, “The Civil Society Argument,” in Ronald Beiner, ed., *Theorizing Citizenship*, esp. pp. 169–171; G.M. Tamas, “A Disquisition on Civil Society,” *Social Research* 61, no. 2 (Summer 1994), pp. 220–221. Civil society in the form of multinational corporations, certain religious and political movements, or any group that “gets out of control” could become oppressive and destroy all vestiges of citizenship. This particular nightmare will probably not be realized since the state, if shrinking, is in fact far from total collapse. Civil society is parasitic on the state and its control of violence, and it can flourish only on the basis of the stability provided by effective states.

36. Michael Walzer, “Citizenship,” pp. 217–218.

37. Madelyn Gutwirth, “*Citoyens, Citoyennes*: Cultural Regression and the Subversion of Female Citizenship in the French Revolution,” pp. 19–28 in Renee Waldinger et al., eds., *The French Revolution*.

38. Liang Qichao, *Yinbingshi wenji* (Collected essays from the ice-drinker’s studio) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1926), juan 2:14b-15a.

39. “Renlei junli shuo” (On equalizing human labor), in Li Miaogen, ed., *Liu Shipei lunxue lunzheng* (Liu Shipei on scholarship and on politics), (Shanghai: Fudan Daxue chubanshe, 1990), p. 374.

40. See Stephen C. Angle, “Did Someone Say ‘Rights’? Liu Shipei’s Concept of *Quanli*,” Seventh East-West Philosophers’ Conference, Honolulu, 2 January 1995.

41. Useful overviews of this question may be found in three essays published in Leroy S. Rouner, ed., *Human Rights and the World’s Religions* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988): Henry Rosemont, Jr., “Why Take Rights Seriously? A Confucian Critique,” pp. 167–182; W. Theodore de Bary, “Neo-Confucianism and Human Rights,” pp. 183–198; and Roger T. Ames, “Rites as Rights: The Confucian Alternative,” pp. 199–216. See also Donald J. Monroe, ed., *Individualism and Holism: Studies in Confucian and Taoist Values* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985).

42. Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

43. Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

44. Don C. Price, "The Ancestral Nation and China's Political Culture," Centennial Symposium on Sun Yat-sen's Founding of the Kuomintang for Revolution, Taipei, Taiwan, 19–23 November 1994; see also his "Early Chinese Revolutionaries: Autonomy, Family and Nationalism," *Family Process and Political Process in Modern Chinese History*, (Taibei: Modern History Institute, Academica Sinica, 1992), part 2, pp. 1015–1053.

45. Don C. Price, "Ancestral Nation," p. 20.

46. Today, scholars are largely agreed that anything resembling a hereditary aristocracy disappeared with the collapse of the Tang dynasty in the tenth century, as described by the early twentieth-century Japanese scholar Naitō Konan, although a number of prominent lineages retained their status throughout the late imperial (Ming–Qing) era.

47. Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890–1907* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 95–112. Through the reform movement of 1898, Liang retained a certain attachment to universal ideals and the "grouping of the world" (*tianxia qun*); however, he was already interested in promoting the Chinese nation-state, accepted a social Darwinian interpretation of the struggle for survival among nations, and credited the West with great success in this regard. After the disaster of 1898, Liang became entirely devoted to nationalism, though a nationalism still rooted in universal moral categories.

Liang's thought will be discussed in greater detail in this introduction, below. This volume does not include an essay focusing on Liang's highly influential writings of the period from 1895 through the 1911 Revolution, though he is cited frequently; Liang has received considerable scholarly attention. In addition to Hao Chang's work, see also the recent Xiaobing Tang, *Global Space and the Nationalist Discourse of Modernity: The Historical Thinking of Liang Qichao* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); two works by Zhang Pengyuan (Chang P'eng-yuan): *Liang Qichao yu Qingji geming* (Liang Qichao and late Qing revolution) (Taibei: Institute of Modern History, Academica Sinica, 1964); *Lixianpai yu Xinhai geming* (The constitutionalists and the 1911 Revolution) (Taibei: Institute of Modern History, Academica Sinica, 1969); and Philip C.C. Huang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Modern Chinese Liberalism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972). See below for further comments on Liang's notions of citizenship.

48. See Shimada Kenji (Joshua A. Fogel, trans.), *Pioneer of the Chinese Revolution: Zhang Binglin and Confucianism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991); Young-tsu Wong, *Search for Modern Nationalism: Zhang Binglin and Revolutionary China, 1869–1936* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1989).

49. See Benjamin I. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964); and James Reeve Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

50. Zhang Binglin was far from a complete adherent of social Darwinism or even a believer in progress, much less linear history, but he was certainly influenced by the social Darwinian worldview.

51. John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture and Class in the Nationalist Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

52. Richard Falk, "The Making of Global Citizenship," pp. 127–140 in Bart van Steenbergen, ed., *The Condition of Citizenship*.

53. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, "Citizenship and National Identity," in Bart van Steenbergen, ed., *The Condition of Citizenship*, pp. 21–22: "The nation-state provided both the infrastructure for rational administration and the legal frame for free individual and collective action. . . . and laid the foundations for cultural and ethnic homogeneity on

the basis of which it then proved possible to push ahead with the democratization of government from the late eighteenth century.”

54. Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, esp. pp. 27–48.

55. See Roger R. Thompson, *China's Local Councils in the Age of Constitutional Reform: 1898–1911* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); and Douglas Reynolds, *China, 1898–1912: The Xinheng Revolution and Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993). The “local self-government” movement is discussed in this volume by Ma Xiaoquan.

56. Liang Qichao, *Xinminshuo* (Taibei: Taiwan Zhonghua shuju, 1959). For interpretations, see Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, pp. 149–219; and Xiaobing Tang, *Global Space*, pp. 21–29. “Xinmin” is often translated “new citizen,” which certainly represents Liang's intentions; however, the more literal “new people” represents better how the phrase would have been read at the time without prejudging Liang's intentions. More specifically, Liang was calling for a “renewal” of the people to create a citizenry.

57. Xiaobing Tang, *Global Space*, p. 22; cf. Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, p. 158.

58. Cf. Xiaobing Tang, *Global Space*, pp. 23–25.

59. Liang Qichao, *Xinminshuo*, pp. 12–16; cf. Chang Hao, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, pp. 151–152; Stephen Charles Angle, “Concepts in Context,” pp. 93–103, 173–179.

60. It may well seem Liang's condemnation was unfair to a philosophy centrally concerned with social and political ethics; however, given Liang's equation of public with the nation-state, he was of course correct.

61. *Xinminshuo*, pp. 18–22.

62. Aside from nation-states, Liang also understood “races” to be units of Darwinian competition.

63. *Xinminshuo*, p. 6. In another essay, Liang defined a participating citizenry: “The state is an aggregation of the people as a whole. If it is the people of a state who govern, legislate, and plan for the interest of the whole state and stave off the troubles which might afflict the state, the people then cannot be bullied and the state cannot be overthrown. This means citizenry.” Cited in Chang Hao, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, p. 164.

64. Xiaobing Tang, *Global Space*, pp. 26–27; cf. Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, pp. 33–36. This and the above paragraph is adapted from my “Citizenship and Human Rights in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Thought: Liu Shipei and Liang Qichao,” in Wm. Theodore de Bary and Tu Wei-ming, eds., *Confucianism and Human Rights*, copyright © 1997 by Columbia University Press. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

65. *Xinminshuo*, p. 39; cf. Chang Hao, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, p. 195.

66. Kang Youwei, “Gongmin zizhi pian,” in Zhang Nan and Wang Renzhi, eds. *Xinhai geming qianshidian jian shilun quanji* (Selected opinion from the decade before the Revolution of 1911) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1960), vol. 1a, pp. 172–190. Kang's essay is also cited in the articles by Murata Yūjirō, Ma Xiaoquan, and Wang Fan-sen in this volume.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

68. Lin Xie, “Guomin yijian shu” (Petition on the citizenry's opinion), in *Xinhai geming qianshidian jian shilun*, vol. 1b, pp. 892–894.

69. *Ibid.*, pp. 893–894.

70. Wang Jingwei, “Minzu de guomin,” *Xinhai geming qianshidian jian shilun*, vol. 2a, pp. 82–114. The term “minzu” (“a people”) refers both to nation and race; thus, Wang's essay might also be rendered “Race and Citizenry” or “Racial/National Citizenship.” As well, “guomin” conflates the English national and citizen, as noted above. In the end, of course, the point is not precise translation today but how the terms were invested with meaning at the time. For Wang's essay, see also Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from*

the Nation, pp. 36–37; and Jerome B. Grieder, *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China* (New York: Free Press, 1981), p. 183.

71. Wang Jingwei, “Minzu de guomin,” p. 83.
72. *Ibid.*, p. iii. Wang was of course echoing the slogan of the French Revolution.
73. This paragraph is adapted from my “Citizenship and Human Rights in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Thought: Liu Shipei and Liang Qichao,” in Wm. Theodore de Bary and Tu Wei-ming, eds., *Confucianism and Human Rights*, copyright © 1997 by Columbia University Press. Reprinted with permission of the publisher. Both the definition of Chinese nationalism—the degree to which the “Chinese people” would be defined on putatively racial grounds—and the political role of Confucianism were at stake in the split between reformers and revolutionaries, but at this level of historical generalization what the two groups shared is more important. It should also be remembered that the ideological structure of radicalism meant that there was more a spectrum from mild reformism to extreme revolutionism than there were two fully distinct positions.
74. See the essay by Ingo Schäfer in this volume.
75. Liang Qichao, *Qingdai xueshu gailun* (Intellectual trends during the Qing) (Taibei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1977), pp. 140–141; see Immanuel C.Y. Hsü, trans., *Intellectual Trends in the Ch'ing Period* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 101.
76. See Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Waiting for the Dawn: A Plan for the Prince* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).
77. See Joan Judge's essay in this volume; also see her “Public Opinion and the New Politics of Contestation in the Late Qing, 1904–1911,” *Modern China* 20.1 (January 1994), pp. 64–91.
78. Andrew J. Nathan, *Chinese Democracy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 145–148. Figures are unreliable here, but a number of daily and weekly newspapers featuring commercial news (and also including political news and editorial discussions) were flourishing by the 1890s. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of usually short-lived publications appeared in the last decades of the Qing; most were tiny, though a few probably reached tens of thousands of readers with each issue for a period of several years. Journals were passed hand to hand and sometimes read out loud in teahouses. Journals published by exiles were smuggled into the mainland. Most publications were written in a fairly easy-to-understand mixture of classical and vernacular prose.
79. Yuan had taken his original oath of office as provisional president on 10 March 1912 in Beijing.
80. The following description is taken from *Zhengfu gongbao* (Public reports of the government, hereafter “ZFGB”) 9/18/1914, no. 512 “cheng”; ZFGB 10/13/1914, no. 876 “tonggao”; ZFGB 10/14/1914, no. 877 “cheng”; and the *Peking Daily News* (hereafter “PDN”), 10/11/14.
81. This spatial symbolism is discussed in David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 1–19, 284–294 *passim*.
82. *Shibao* (“Eastern Times,” Shanghai—hereafter “SB”), 10/30/1914, p. 4.
83. SB, 12/21/1914, p. 3.
84. PDN 1/24/1914, p.4; SB, 12/21/1914, p. 3.
85. ZFGB 2/8/1914, no. 631 “mingling.”
86. *Tian shi zi womin shi; tian ting zi womin ting*. From the *Shujing* (Book of Documents) V:1:ii:7.
87. ZFGB 14 December 1915, no. 1294, p. 496.
88. David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing*, esp. pp. 167–197.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 284.

90. The inadequacies of the “Western impact” model, which applied to intellectual history as well as larger historical questions, have been well explored. See Paul A. Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984) for an overview. Arif Dirlik has criticized what he sees as a detextualized preoccupation with culture, pointing out that “influences” begs the question of why particular Chinese were attracted to particular features of the West at particular times—see “Culture, Society and Revolution: A Critical Discussion of American Studies of Modern Chinese Thought,” *Working Papers in Asian/Pacific Studies*, Duke University, 1985. However, an excessively historicist approach will leave out how intellectual currents actively and dialectically shape discourses.

91. The charge may be truer of intellectuals and urban folk in the 1920s and after, though Li Dazhao, Jimmy Yen, Fei Xiaotong, Liang Shuming, and many other communists, anarchists, reformers, and academics retained an urgent interest in the countryside.

92. See Marie-Claire Bergère, *The Golden Age of the Chinese Bourgeoisie, 1911–1937* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). It is particularly difficult to distinguish between Chinese merchants who remained aloof from Western and Japanese business interests as opposed to a “compradore bourgeoisie” working for or cooperating with the foreigners.

Civic Associations, Political Parties, and the Cultivation of Citizenship Consciousness in Modern China

Liu Zehua and Liu Jianqing

Society is a product of the relations among people. The assimilation of humans into society gives people diverse status in different historical stages and in different societies and nations. The assorted labels of subjects, nationals, peoples, citizens, and so forth, precisely reflect this process of historical socialization. In traditional Chinese society, imperial power was supreme. “All the lands within the six directions belong to the emperor” and “Wherever there is a sign of human presence, all are subjects of the emperor,” in the words of the Grand Historian.¹ The emperor was the Son of Heaven, standing above all humanity; he regarded his subjects as dogs and horses. His subjects abased and humbled themselves, some volunteering to be his dogs and horses and some forced to become his slaves. Confucian theory made this seem reasonable, and court regulations systematized it. The “three bonds” embodied this principle and its institutions.² Thus the notion that “if the emperor tells his subject to die, his subject does not dare to live; if the father tells his son to perish, his son does not dare to go on breathing” became a kind of natural and unquestioned premise. This also formed the basis of a political culture deeply affecting two very different groups: the ministers (the class of officials) and the common people.

Of several hundred views of what imperial subjects should be, the main ones are as follows:

1. A mentality of being willing to become commoner slaves, dogs, and

horses. “The ruler is he to whom the people look up and whom they create,” and “Being a subject is to look up to and create the one above,” according to the *Guanzi*.³ If everything that the subjects possessed, even their lives, was a gift of the emperor, then their willingness to become his slaves was only logical.

2. A mentality of placing hope in the sacred emperor and the upright officials, and entrusting one’s fate to them.

3. The consciousness of fear and guilt in the presence of the emperor. In the presence of the emperor all the great ministers would begin with “truly fearful, truly apprehensive,” “bowing low, bowing low,” “deserving of death for speaking,” “your minister’s faults deserve death,” as preliminary remarks addressed to the emperor. Even if ministers were wrongly condemned to death, they still would be grateful for the imperial benevolence. The sense of original sin of the ministers and the fearful attitudes of the subjects melded together to produce a kind of universal consciousness of guilt on the part of imperial subjects.

4. The notion of venerating sages. Originally sages and rulers were kept distinct. Confucius, for example, was a sage but not an emperor. Subsequently, beginning with Qin Shihuang, the roles of emperor and sage were combined, and thus “sage on high” (*shengshang*) became an elegant appellation for the Son of Heaven (*tianzi*). The sage Confucius became a talisman for emperors down through the ages. The term *sage* bestowed great stature and absolute truth on the emperor. Other concepts—from clan, succession, and rank to today’s glorification of dogma and compliance to superiors—all accord with the consciousness of subjects. This consciousness penetrated deeply into people’s hearts and dominated their political behavior. The rise of a new dynasty was nothing but another cycle in traditional cultural attitudes.

Contemporary citizens generally are people who possess nationality in a state and also individually enjoy rights and carry responsibilities in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and laws. Contemporary citizenship gradually evolved through the historical process of the development of a commodity economy, the formation of the theory of bourgeois democracy, and the establishment of the capitalist system. Free laborers liberated from bound status, together with capitalists, accepted the market principle of free exchange. Over several centuries this principle was embodied in law and in institutions. The bourgeois constitutions guaranteed “the sanctity of private property,” which of course immediately benefited the bourgeoisie. At the same time, citizens’ rights concretized the notions of equality and liberty, as they were prescribed in law as the “right to life,” the “right to labor,” the “right of suffrage,” and the “right to organize,” as well as citizens’ “freedom of thought and conscience,” the “freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and association,” and so forth. The formal equality of bourgeois democracy obscures true inequalities, which stem from the system of private property. Engels called this the “pseudo-virtuous, hidden system of slavery,” though he also said, “At least the principle of freedom has been recognized, and the oppressed are themselves concerned with the realization of

this principle.”⁴ As the concepts of equality and liberty are instituted, more people gradually become citizens who possess such political attitudes as the consciousness of their autonomy, of their right to participate in government, and of their right to supervise the state—leading finally to a society composed entirely of citizens.

Reform and the Emergence of Revolutionary Organizations and Citizenship Consciousness

The consciousness of citizenship in China did not develop naturally out of the history of Chinese society and intellectual culture. Rather, it came as fully formed theory and institutions from the West. The propagation of Western learning and the formation of citizenship consciousness led to extremely complex circumstances because of the differences between the central value systems of Chinese and Western cultures, the assault of bourgeois imperialism as Western learning arrived here, and the resistance of the Chinese people. A group of semi-new, semi-old, neither fully Chinese nor fully Westernized intellectuals who followed the notion of “Chinese learning as the basis, Western learning for practical affairs” emerged out of the Western affairs movement of “self-strengthening” and “seeking wealth” before the Sino-Japanese War of 1904–1905. But only after the Sino-Japanese War did they, in Liang Qichao’s words, “awaken from the great dream of four thousand years.”⁵ Military defeats, the losses of territory, and indemnities jolted people’s minds, and some people with a sense of the future began to realize that the different cultural qualities of China and the West were opposed to each other.

Several essays Yan Fu wrote in 1895 clearly illustrate this. “Given the conditions of today, I’d rather carry the burden of being denounced as overly passionate than to shilly-shally around and become a shameless hypocrite.” Today,

The culture of four thousand years and the enormous empire have declined to such a pass because our culture (*jiaohua*) and learning are fallacious. It is not merely the case that with the government of the Qin, Li Si started all our troubles.⁶ Rather, if we look at the question fundamentally, Confucianism⁷ and Neo-Confucianism⁸ also share the blame.⁹

In other words, Confucian notions of imperial sovereignty and sacrality had been inescapable. Yan Fu also made a series of cogent comparisons of Chinese and Western cultures, pointing out the following:

Chinese most assert the three bonds while Westerners primarily uphold equality; Chinese practice nepotism while Westerners esteem the meritorious; Chinese order the empire with filial piety while Westerners rule through public-spiritedness (*gong*); Chinese venerate rulers while Westerners glorify the people; Chinese prize the orthodoxy that creates conformity while Westerners

follow their interests yet maintain unity; and Chinese mostly honor taboos while Westerners emphasize criticism. In regard to wealth, Chinese believe in frugality while Westerners found new enterprises; Chinese pursue sincerity and simplicity while Westerners chase after pleasure and enjoyment. In regard to personal relations Chinese praise modesty while Westerners are more expressive; Chinese esteem complex ceremony while Westerners prefer simple directness. In regard to learning, Chinese praise great erudition while Westerners respect new knowledge. In regard to disasters, Chinese resign themselves to fate while Westerners rely on their own efforts.¹⁰

Scholars often cited Yan Fu's words as a paradigmatic expression of the contrasts between Chinese and Western cultures. In fact, we ought to consider it to be the true origins of the democratic enlightenment movement in modern China. What Yan Fu refuted was the various forms of subject consciousness of the Chinese people, while he endorsed everything related to the Westerners' citizenship consciousness. Yan Fu thought that for China the "basic plan absolutely entails Western learning. If this reasoning isn't clear, we will lose public support. The essence of national salvation lies here. The essence of self-strengthening lies here."¹¹

Three years later Yan Fu published his translation of "Evolution" (Tianyanlun). He used such new theories as "natural selection and survival of the fittest," "the transformations of natural law do not respect precedent," "in the struggle for survival, the adaptive succeed," and "the evolution of humanity is a struggle with nature" in order to "promote the people's strength," "improve the people's intelligence," and "renew the people's morality." As well, Yan Fu said, "evolution is what enables those who can form groups to survive while those who cannot form groups perish, and those who form groups will survive while those who do not form groups will perish."¹² The notion of groups (*gun*) here is equivalent to the West's notion of assemblages that are formed by autonomous individuals, as in contemporary civic associations and political parties. These kinds of groupings must break away from relationships based on blood and locality, and only when they are composed of individuals who possess citizenship consciousness can such associations be organized. At the end of the nineteenth century, Yan Fu's presentation of Western theories, like many sparks, set China's best minds on passionate fire. "Since Yan Fu's books appeared, the theories of the struggle for survival and natural selection have been transforming people's thinking. The attitudes of the people have accordingly changed: Aroused by the climate of the time, many are calling for unity of the group, expulsion of foreigners, and expulsion of the Manchus due to Yan Fu's immense contribution."¹³ Yan Fu's two notions of "improve the people's intelligence" and "promote group unity" played a leading role in arousing citizenship consciousness and creating a movement to form political groups.

In the fifty-odd years from the opening of China to the reform movement of 1898, China increasingly saw progress in sending students abroad, translating

Western books, founding newspapers, opening schools, and organizing study societies. All these policies improved the intelligence of the people. If the Western affairs movement did not completely make the people intelligent, it still greatly opened their eyes. The intellectuals of the Western affairs movement, particularly those who had studied abroad, cannot be viewed from the same perspective as the old-style scholars. The traditional literati were a combination of scholar and official while the intellectuals of the Western affairs movement had already grasped the new learning (the West's scientific and technological culture), thus becoming more specialized and professional. Official careers were not the only route open to them, and they became the basis of the new civic associations. However, they could not yet break their dependency on the Western affairs bureaucracy and were not able to form civic associations which had a truly modern political nature. As individuals, they still had not obtained autonomous citizenship consciousness.

The reformist and revolutionary movements arose nearly simultaneously with China's loss to Japan in 1895 and the bankruptcy of the Western affairs movement. Yet not only had they been inspired by the Western affairs movement, but also both marked its further evolution. The reformism of such men as Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and Tan Sitong stemmed from the Western books translated during the Western affairs era. Famous figures of the Western affairs movement like Zheng Guanying, Huang Zunxian, and Ma Jianzhong became reformers while many others joined revolutionary organizations. The reform movement was substantively different from the Western affairs movement. Reformist groups appeared on the political stage as associations for social reform, wanting to establish a parliament, reform the bureaucracy, abolish the examination system, promote commerce and industry, improve the military, emphasize foreign affairs, and so forth. In basing their proposals on Western learning, they broke the restraints of the three bonds and kingly sovereignty. They planned to abandon the old literati's traditional dependency and struggle for a new political role.

The political associations they founded, such as the Strengthening Study Society, the Southern Study Society, the National Preservation Society, and the like, which were dedicated to implementing reforms and a constitutional monarchy, had some of the qualities of a modern political party. Around the time of the 1898 reforms, one count shows that 668 study societies of all kinds had emerged, including more than 360 dedicated to the reform of politics, education, scholarship, youth, customs, and so forth, and more than 300 concerned with commerce, religion, and so on.¹⁴ The Southern Study Society in Hunan grew to include more than 1,200 members. Study societies nurtured such dedicated revolutionaries as Tan Sitong and Tang Caichang. They used their blood to write their martyrdom in the drama of Chinese history. What was the value of this scene? Liang Qichao wrote that "what made the reforms of 1898 worthwhile was their spirit"—that is to say, a spirit which is "fully dedicated to the benefit of the

entire citizenry.”¹⁵ In the posthumous words left by Kang Guangren: “With the eight-legged essay abolished, great talents (*rencai*) will appear; as we perish, China will be strengthened at last.” The time when these great talents emerged to struggle for the benefit of the entire citizenry was the moment an autonomous and independent strata of citizens appeared. The difficulty that this strata of citizens faced in forming associations has been the pattern in China ever since the six martyrdoms. The *Journal of Disinterested Criticism* (*Qingyi bao*) published an essay on “Life and Death.”

Since the reforms of 1898, there have been no so-called blood reforms. However, with the six martyrs, the blood goal was established. Then with the uprising of Tang Caichang, thirty resolute men were martyred on the same day. The tradition they established spread throughout the nation, and everyone adopted the goal of sacrificing their lives to save the nation and assumed a spirit of independence and fearlessness. Although the accomplishment of the task may take a long time or a short time, its incitement of the people’s hearts and arousal of the scholars’ spirit are certainly sufficient to change the world.¹⁶

The revolutionaries took a further step forward, converting from peaceful reform to violent revolution. After the two groups debated, the majority of reformers became supporters of the revolutionaries. Even Sun Yat-sen had become a revolutionary only after writing to the powerful official Li Hongzhang. At the beginning of the twentieth century, revolutionary public opinion overtook Kang Youwei’s reformist Society to Protect the Emperor to become mainstream. Revolutionary organizations allied to form the National Alliance (*Tongmenghui*) as China’s first unified political party in 1905. The collapse of the Qing dynasty was the greatest accomplishment of the 1911 Revolution; it was also the signal achievement of the National Alliance, which was composed primarily of revolutionary intellectuals. However, if not for the enlightenment education of the reformers of the late nineteenth century and the great amount of ideological propaganda produced by political associations, the great enterprise of the revolutionaries of the National Alliance could not have been achieved so quickly. The reformers and revolutionaries both shook off tradition to become intellectuals advocating Western democracy. They both sought to save the nation, differing only on the means. Not only were the plans of the reformers—which were moderate, gradual, and depended on the emperor—checked by the conservatives in power, but also the reformers failed to carry out their own ideas of autonomy, unity, and using the strength of the new associations to seize power. Thus did they waste a good chance.

An autonomous citizenry would certainly safeguard its citizenship consciousness with new civic associations and political parties. The ideas behind the actions and organizations of the revolutionaries were largely derived from the popularity of Western democracy and political associations. After the Sino-Japanese war, reformist journals like the *Current Affairs Journal*, *Journal of Disin-*

terested Criticism, and National News became safe sites where Western study societies and political parties were introduced.¹⁷ In regard to study societies, it was said: "The arousal of China lies in revitalizing people's abilities (*rencai*), and the revitalization of people's abilities lies in promoting study societies."¹⁸ Another journal noted, "China's ongoing weaknesses are rooted in our inability to cooperate to promote Chinese learning."¹⁹ And in another journal: "Civic associations are necessary to countries—Germany, France, and Italy all flourished because of civic associations."²⁰ For Westerners, "because every profession and occupation has its association—small professions may consist of a few hundred branches while large ones may consist of thousands—so learning flourishes, scholars band together, the people are stabilized, and the nation is strengthened."²¹

The purpose of these statements was to clarify that study societies were the ground on which citizenship consciousness could be nourished. In 1896 Tang Caichang drafted the first "Regulations for Chinese Study Societies" using the objectives of Western civic associations while treating the regulations of the Fushe and Jishe in the late Ming as "similar to those in the West," in serving the purpose of allowing "the people to become involved in affairs of state."²²

In regard to political parties: "A party assembles patriots from the entire country to participate in the political affairs; a party assembles the debaters of the entire country to discuss the affairs of the nation," according to one journal.²³ "A party attempts to take national power to carry out its goals so as to incorporate like-minded people into it," said another.²⁴ "A party is that which unifies for the sake of the nation; a faction is that which is formed for the sake of individuals," in the words of Liang Qichao.²⁵ "Parties are stars in the firmament of the civilization, the compass arrows, and the military commanders of national politics."²⁶ Finally, "Parties, by asserting themselves in national politics, gain sovereignty and so even evil monarchs have no way to act beyond the pale."²⁷

There were numerous discussions regarding such features as the definition, requirements, functions, membership, and leadership of political parties. "From now on, the survival of China depends on whether political parties exist. . . . Only if we establish a great party, will we save a dying China."²⁸

The generation of new-style intellectuals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in China organized a new kind of political party and actively participated in social reform. Even though the reformers and the revolutionaries debated issues of practice and theory, they nonetheless worked in symbiosis, exerting widespread influence on society, ranging from the emperor and nobles at the top to the commoners and humble folk at the bottom. Although we cannot say that popular spirit was greatly aroused, at least the people would not be struck with terror because the emperor disappeared. How much more effective was this than "enlightening the people" through the methods of normal education! The citizenship consciousness of the Chinese people was transmitted through these modern associations.

Party Politics and the Promotion of Citizenship Consciousness

When the republic was founded, the various rights of citizens adopted from the West were inscribed for the first time in the Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China. The widespread formation of associations and parties followed. The original, secret National Alliance was turned into the open Nationalist Party (Guomindang) to meet the needs of parliamentary democracy. Huang Xing said, “If we want to ameliorate the conditions of the Republic over time, we must work through political parties.”²⁹ Sun Yat-sen was also caught up in this prevailing trend, commenting that, “With the founding of the Republic, many things need to be done, and if we want to advance smoothly, we must rely on parties.”³⁰ The constitutionalists even claimed, “Regardless of whether the national polity is monarchical or republican, both systems can only function through parties.”³¹ Furthermore, the political enthusiasm of all the groups at the upper levels of society—intellectuals, leading merchants and industrialists, religious groups, and the like—was aroused to organize associations and parties. “When the basis of the state was tentatively established, political associations rose up in response, and small parties sprang up.”³² Another observer noted, “Groups and associations emerged like a popular craze while all kinds of new parties sprouted like spring grasses.”³³ It is difficult to determine the precise number of associations and parties founded in the early republic. Professor Zhang Yu-fa, a scholar from Taiwan, has calculated on the basis of a large number of sources that 682 “newly open associations” were founded from the original Wuchang uprising to the end of 1913. Of these, 312 were political, 97 were social, 72 were commercial, 20 were philanthropic, 53 were for the public good, 52 were academic, 28 were educational, 18 were military, 15 were religious, 14 were for national defense, 9 were for moral improvement, and 10 miscellaneous. This does not include the 193 constitutionalist and revolutionary organizations which appeared between 1894 and 1911.³⁴ Another calculation indicates that 1,242 commercial associations existed in 1915, many of which were also engaged in politics or related activities.³⁵

In terms of political structure, the upsurge of parties implied the reconstruction of the national polity and the political structure after the transfer of national power. Every party strenuously competed to become the center of national power or to obtain partial power. Thus party members, as people who possessed citizenship consciousness, could exercise their rights to vote and be elected to office, join political bodies, and participate in initiatives, referenda, inspections, recalls, and so forth. None of the parties, of whatever stripe, could avoid being drawn into new kinds of democratic processes and being educated and polished by the democratic system. This was a great blow to the traditional political culture and popular social psychology. Since China’s size and population were so large and its economy and culture backward, the influence of the 1911 Revolution was

largely limited to the upper levels of society and the large and middle-sized coastal and riverine cities. The sources indicate that of the 312 political associations mentioned above, 82 were located in Beijing and 80 in Shanghai, constituting more than half the total; Guangzhou with 25 and Nanjing with 16 came next; and Wuhan, Changsha, Tianjin, Chongqing, and other cities had less than 10 each.³⁶ The platforms of different parties make it clear that only the minority had a relatively well developed set of objectives, platform policies, organizational principles, and regulations. Most parties declared their support for the republican form of government or for the government's policies, but what they actually promoted was a mixed bag of ideas, such as militarism, local self-government, party cabinets, nationalism, welfare policies, equality of the sexes, and socialism. A few parties even supported the restoration of the ex-emperor in their platforms. But the overall trend appeared to be democratic republicanism.

The parties proliferated only briefly. The Provisional Constitution specified that after the constitution was in effect for ten months a parliament would be elected. In the attempt to win parliamentary seats, the parties made alliances in great numbers. The natural trend was for the revolutionaries and the constitutionalists to become rivals. The revolutionaries organized the Nationalist Party (Guomindang) while the constitutionalists organized the Progressive Party (Jinbudang). In addition, there were also several small parties.

The campaign for parliament started in the first week of December 1912 and ended in March of 1913. This was the first democratic election in Chinese history. The political fate of the candidates was determined by the citizens' votes. The members of parliament were entirely produced through popular vote. The period of these elections was not only a time when the parties performed a real social function but also when citizens were exercising their rights. This application of Western-style democratic politics in itself constituted a basic rejection of the traditional political system. The parliament was composed of an upper house and a lower house. The election law specified the distribution of seats, voter qualifications, methods and procedures of voting, and so on.

The parties all went on high alert and competed for votes during the preparatory stage. The Nationalists proclaimed: "In introducing new members, possession of suffrage rights is the qualification" and "The more party members we have, the more ability we have, and every additional member means an additional vote in the future, which may produce another member of parliament and thus gain us political power."³⁷ The Republican Party (Gonghedang) demanded that members must not: (1) relinquish their voting rights; (2) vote for people outside the party; (3) "throw away" their vote; and (4) lag behind others.³⁸ Competing candidates from different parties unceasingly made speeches professing "the propaganda of the party's platform" and "the priority of the party's morality." Elections also saw various kinds of perversions and scandals such as vote soliciting, vote stealing, bribery, threats, and the like. In sum, everyone was thrilled when the form of Western democratic elections was first adopted by

Chinese, considering that, “With the condition of our nation as it is today, its strength and very survival rest on this.”³⁹ This parliamentary election, which involved tens of millions of people, both illustrated the social function of the political parties and constituted a notable democratic exercise of the whole nation, spreading citizens’ consciousness of their sovereignty—including a concept of parties, a sense of participation, and an awareness of being masters of the nation. Public opinion circles at the time described types of voters as follows:

First are those who, adhering to their own beliefs, are neither dominated by a party nor influenced by others but purely pursue their own will. Following are those who take their party’s direction as their own. Next are those who are filled with provincialism, taking the ideas of localism as their own. Then come those who comply with the wishes of their friends and relatives, making promises according to the depth of the relationship. And finally there are those who lack beliefs, only wanting to calculate the magnitude of monetary rewards.⁴⁰

The five attitudes of voters reflected in this view generally accorded with reality. However, it should be noted that those who took their direction from the parties were in the mainstream. This was because political competition among the various parties actually represented a struggle between two large parties—in essence, an open rivalry between two major campaigns: the supporters and opponents of Yuan Shikai. The result of the parliamentary elections was a sweeping victory by the Nationalist Party. This verified the function of the parties in the process of the exercise of citizens’ rights and also verified the attitudes of voters longing for a democratic republic. However, the party politics of the early Republic lasted just the blink of an eye. Yuan Shikai assassinated Song Jiaoren and dissolved the Nationalist Party, slaughtering the newborn democratic politics with the butcher’s knife of feudal dictatorship, giving the revolutionaries a sharp lesson.

The democratic political forms of the West were completely different from the traditional political structure of China. Neither the instant overthrow of the emperor nor the reestablishment of the political authority of a new state could be completed in one step. Although the newly formed class of citizens organized parties, elected representatives, and organized a cabinet in striving for the execution of party politics, the majority of them still had not learned to act as citizens. Notions of traditional politics were consciously or unconsciously latent in party politics and in the contemporary concept of citizenship. This was revealed in the following:

1. Rule by people was automatically substituted for a legal system before rule by law was conceived. For example, Yuan Shikai, serving as temporary president, ignored procedures and limits established by law. Without the premier countersigning his orders and acting against the advice of others, Yuan Shikai in his own name dispatched the Zhili governor, Wang Zhixiang, to proceed to Nanjing to demobilize the army. This led to the fall of the Tang Shaoyi cabinet,

yet what the various parties noticed in the president's violation of the constitution was not the procedural violation—they did not reprimand or impeach Yuan for acts against the constitution—but rather they were concerned with the abilities of Wang Zhixiang and the question of Tang Shaoyi's character. Legal procedures were not important in the minds of party leaders. The historian Li Jiannong evaluated the incident as follows:

In terms of this kind of problem, forget about France or Britain, even in the case of Japan, where the emperor is sovereign, if the emperor issues an edict that has not been countersigned by the prime minister, what kind of huge fuss would the Japanese parliament and press kick up? "Isn't this a violation of the constitution!?" The resulting sound wave would shake the entire nation.⁴¹

After the assassination of Song Jiaoren, the parties displayed a wide variety of reactions which shared, however, one point in common: In regard to imposing sanctions for Yuan's violation of the constitution, they neither felt any great urgency nor did they try to defend the provisional constitution. The Nationalist Party had no choice but to rise up against Yuan, although superficial conceptions of the legal system were otherwise prevalent. In the West, the establishment of bourgeois democracy was a development of reason, but at that time in China, reason was still far from penetrating society.

2. Different political opinions easily evolved into hostile consciousness, since political thinking was habituated to uniformity. The multitude of parties established in the early Republic appeared to be the reflection of pluralistic politics. Many parties proclaimed their objectives to be "natural rights," "sovereignty of the people," and the "use of Rousseau's goals of a truly popular society," and they adopted a theory of "sexual equality." Also, in their organizational systems, they borrowed such arrangements as "directors," "administrators," an "inspectorate," and ranks from Western political parties. However, these schemes all remained indigestible and did not become incorporated into the deep structure of party consciousness. On the contrary, the influence of traditional factions and associations was still deeply rooted in the vast majority of party members. They believed in uniting people on the same side to attack others whom they regarded as enemies. However, a number of party leaders believed that two parties should oppose each other only on the basis of fair competition. Liang Qichao noted:

Two parties will expound contrary political positions, each proclaiming its own devotion to the national good and the welfare of the people, and if Party A questions Party B, Party B must be wrong; but if Party B questions Party A, Party A must be wrong—while [the people] do not know that they are both correct. The national good and prosperity are basically complex, and parties may work at cross purposes yet still accomplish things. . . . Thus whenever a nation that possesses two healthy parties is run by the policies of either party, the nation will certainly gain.⁴²

This clearly reflects a dualistic theory of political thought. Since both parties seek the national good and the welfare of the people, they should “each clarify their message and debate back and forth in order for the people to choose between them.” Liang also illustrated this with the principles of party competition in the West:

The function of parties entirely lies here [in fair elections]; therefore, when a party with differing political views opposes one’s own party, those in charge of the party should welcome this. However, some undermine the distinction between public and personal and are completely power-mad. They want their party to monopolize political power and detest having another party at their backs. If they are defeated in open battle, they will foment secret plots to eliminate their enemies; sometimes wounding them with slander, sometimes making personal attacks. . . . If its members are so depraved, the party will never grow. If citizens are so depraved, the nation will never thrive.⁴³

Sun Yat-sen believed that “since benefit to the nation and the welfare of the people were the primary considerations for political parties, they should treat each other like brothers. Remember that a civilized nation cannot just have one party; if there were only one party, this would merely be a dictatorship. Politics could not advance.”⁴⁴ Huang Xing and Song Jiaoren expressed similar views.

Knowledge and practice are different matters. In the party competition of the early Republic, differing political positions were frequently mixed with emotion, private interest, bias, faction, retaliation, autocracy, and other “depravities.” Competition could not get on the right track, and the enmity between the parties became more and more impassioned. They “each raise their banner, loose their arrows at each other, and refuse to live under the same sky with each other.”⁴⁵ Not only is this the case between different parties, “but even within the same party people are often jealous of one another, becoming like fire and water. Thus people who disagree not one whit in their ideological goals and spiritual thought nonetheless divide into opposed groups loath to unite.”⁴⁶ When the two houses of parliament opened, the opposing parties were constantly fighting for selfish gains, and even during sessions “yelling and scolding and roughhousing repeatedly occurred, destroying the order of the assembly. People secretly altered the minutes and disseminated them to all the provinces to twist the truth of the situation. Thus opinions concerning the foundations and plans of the nation are not heard yet.”⁴⁷

The consciousness of partisan enmity led to countless incidents of violence during political competition. Fair competition was twisted into each destroying the other. Assassination was even used against different factions or people with differing views in the same party or association. Tao Chengzhang had been a founder of the Restoration Society (Guangfuhui), and he was very independent-minded. He was assassinated by another revolutionary, Chen Qimei, during the 1911 Revolution when his creation of a power base attracted resentment from

within the society. Such kinds of incidents were common. While assassination met with the condemnation of public opinion at the time, Liang Qichao wrote "The Evils of Assassination" to analyze the harm it did to political competition. Sun Yat-sen was outraged by these assassinations, declaring "such barbarous acts as these are not seen in the treatment of the members of other parties in the rest of the world."⁴⁸ However, none of the assassinations ever led to an impeachment case in the parliament; indeed, there were no applicable legal measures or established procedures.

3. The citizenship consciousness held by party members was immature, which further affected the modernization of political parties. Hitting the nail on the head, Liang Qichao said, "Without a healthy citizenry, how can there be healthy parties?"⁴⁹ Citizenship consciousness in the early republic was generally still bound by the concepts of traditional political culture. Most people could not distinguish between modern political parties and the earlier factions and secret societies, comprehend the proper relationship between citizens and parties, or even understand the relationship between parties and the law. Party leaders registered dozens of parties—which was only further evidence of this confusion. The people wanted to learn amid the chaos, yet they could not bear such chaos. It is not surprising that warlordism thereupon arose.

The Reconsideration of Civic Associations and of Subjecthood during the May 4 Era

The system of party politics thus proved abortive in the early republic. It was not so much the case that Yuan Shikai destroyed it; rather, facing the resistance of traditional political culture, it sank of its own weight. Setting aside the fact that the psychological and spiritual conditions of most citizens left them languishing in the mental world of imperial subjects, political parties simply disappeared without a trace in the wake of the failed parliament. Yuan forcibly disbanded the Nationalist Party, and the other parties disintegrated. When the parliament was restored after Yuan's death in 1916, at first a number of party leaders were not concerned with party politics. Liang Qichao went abroad proclaiming his disengagement from politics, though he still wished to devote himself to journalism and organizing civic associations to study cultural questions. The way Sun Yat-sen organized the Chinese Revolutionary Party (Zhonghua gemingdang) was quite different from the way the Nationalist Party was organized. After the defeat of the anti-Yuan movement of 1913 he too retired from public life to devote himself to studying and writing, reflecting on how to save China. Huang Xing left for the United States and organized the Society for the Study of European Affairs (Oushi yanjiuhui), and he died soon after. Further, the proclamations "nonparty," "no parties," and "destroy parties" among public opinion circles created an atmosphere of disgust toward all political parties. An essay that was published in the *Independent Weekly* (*Duli zhoubao*) of Shanghai is representative of this outlook:

Now what exactly is a political party? To put it plainly, it is really nothing but a kind of company or conglomerate that monopolizes all the power in the country. Its trademark is “the nation’s benefit, the people’s welfare,” while its capital is directly or indirectly plundered from the sweat and blood of the people and its hangers-on all want to cut off a piece of the national power and live off of it in idleness. . . . In the past year, national affairs have become a mess, political battles have become ferocious, the people are constantly terrified, and they never have a moment of peace. This is what the parties managed to accomplish.⁵⁰

This kind of antiparty tone was quite popular for a time.

As the parties faded, the human relations and ethics championed by Confucianism that the reformers and revolutionaries had previously attacked now returned to the Republican political stage. Yuan Shikai had promoted Confucianism and the classics while restorationists had wanted to designate Confucianism the national religion and “introduce it into the constitution.” The directors of this farce turned out to be Kang Youwei, Yan Fu, and others. Kang became president of the Confucian Society (Kongjiao hui) and campaigned to “preach the Confucian religion and rescue society,” while Yan Fu united twenty members of parliament behind a “motion to elevate the Chinese national spirit.” Their central goal was to base the national spirit of the Republic of China on the four traditional virtues of loyalty, filial piety, integrity, and righteousness. This motion was passed by a majority in parliament. Accordingly, Yuan Shikai issued his “Edict to Admonish the Age,” designating these four virtues as the “national essence.” He condemned Sun Yat-sen and a few other crooked characters for “taking advantage of the weaknesses of the people to promote equality without order and freedom without limits, thus promoting falsehoods across the generations, confounding people with beasts, and completely eliminating all age-old cultural influences of the nation.”

Finally, in prose worthy of a sacred edict, Yuan admonished the people: “A collection of persons makes a family and a collection of families makes a state (*guo*).” And: “Those who behave according to proper standards are termed loyal officials, filial sons, and righteous persons; those who behave wrongly are called rebellious officials, rogue sons, and wild traitors. The decision to be good or bad is freely reached.”⁵¹ The slogans “respect Confucius” and “restore antiquity” were designed to create public opinion that would support a Yuan monarchy. The Peace Planning Society (Chouanhui) was then soon founded. Of its six founders, four had been members of the National Alliance, namely, Sun Yujun, Li Xiehe, Hu Ying, and Liu Shipei; its head, Yang Du, had been a prominent constitutionalist; and the sixth was Yan Fu. It was not the old Qing loyalists but precisely people who had advocated Western democracy ahead of their time and who had been famous revolutionaries who soon actually started to throw out such dicta as “the Republic will destroy the nation,” “Constitutional monarchy will save the nation,” and “Confucianism will order the nation.”

The movements to “restore antiquity” and “restore the monarchy” suddenly spread with great vigor, yet there was a great deal of opposition as well. Liang Qichao thought that as soon as the monarchy had been replaced by a republic, it would be difficult to change back again. He pointed out that republicanism had been fermenting in China for more than ten years and had been in effect for four.

While it was fermenting, revolutionaries slandered the emperor, comparing him to an evil spirit attempting to kill off the people’s faith. The charisma of the monarchy gradually diminished, and then revolutionary goals were attained. During the rapid changes in the national polity and even after the revolution, whenever the official announcements, political proclamations, newspaper articles, and the talk of the streets touched on the emperor, they always called him names and abused him. Thus the sacred awe of the monarchy was thrown down the toilet long ago. Today, regardless of the immense difficulty of restoration, if it is forced on the nation, how will it be possible to gain back the previous force of imperial charisma?⁵²

Liang castigated the Peace Planning Society: “Why are you taking the trouble to create disturbances out of nothing? You are awakening monsters and only confusing the people. You are leaving the nation endless woes.” Liang’s opposition to restorationism was not as radical as that of the revolutionaries, but his comment to the effect that the people had learned about republicanism was absolutely true. Although a number of people were opposed to the revolutionaries, they were also furious with the Peace Planning Society, condemning it as “a source of evil, interfering in national politics, destroying China, and harming the populace, and creating disaster.” They petitioned Yuan Shikai asking him to take disciplinary action, not realizing that he was behind the whole movement. Sun Yat-sen’s Chinese Revolutionary Party raised troops to oppose Yuan and defend the Republic, and the new monarchy died together with Yuan himself. This demonstrates that “restore antiquity” and “restore the monarchy” were nothing but a countertrend. Party politics failed, but the concept of citizenship nonetheless had a fairly strong social basis.

In September 1915 Chen Duxiu founded *New Youth* (Xin qingnian), reviving slogans of democracy and science.⁵³ This may be considered a continuation of the democratic currents of the reform movement and the 1911 Revolution. Historians call this movement “a lantern shining in the darkness.” Its greatest historical value lay in its attacks on the basis of the autocratic political culture of feudalism and the core of China’s traditional political culture: Confucian morality, or “ethico-centrism.” The leaders of the New Culture movement looked into the problem from scratch, discovering that the problem of the ethical enlightenment of those who would be “autonomous rather than slaves” had in fact not yet been solved. “From its very beginning the Hongxian reign [Yuan emperorship] was like a thunderclap that awakened [the Chinese] from their delusive dream, so they knew that the national essence absolutely could not be preserved,” wrote

one.⁵⁴ Li Dazhao, who was to become a founder of the Chinese Communist Party, wrote:

I have always felt that there was a relationship between the Chinese sages and emperors. Before the Hongxian emperor appeared, there were first the reverence for Confucius and sacrifices to Heaven, and when the Nanhai Sage [Kang Youwei] and the pig-tailed general [Zhang Xun] reached Beijing together, the emperor returned to the throne. Now there are people again constantly making a big deal about sagehood. I am afraid. I am extremely fearful for the Republic of China.⁵⁵

Chen Duxiu went so far as to proclaim, “For years, Chinese politics has consisted of only movements of political parties without any citizens’ movements. . . . If something does not arise out of a movement of the majority of citizens (guomin), it is hard to accomplish. And even if it should be accomplished, it will not bring any fundamental progress to the citizens.”⁵⁶ Regardless whether the state is a republic or a constitutional monarchy, if it does not emerge from a majority of the citizens consciously and voluntarily “but only happens to be a good government and a politics of the best persons, then it is base and mean, the same as slaves hoping for their master’s patience or the commoners hoping for benevolent rule by sage rulers and good ministers.”⁵⁷

Democratic enlightenment thus quickly incorporated criticism of Confucianism. Its power and influence greatly surpassed that of the earlier reform movement. With the complete rejection of Confucianism’s hierarchical social bonds and ethics at its core, the criticism of Confucianism exposed the injurious and fraudulent nature of the traditional virtues of loyalty, filial piety, integrity, and righteousness. It pointed out that in Confucianism, “everything begins with filial piety.” “Loyal ministers are only found among filial sons, and thus the ruler and the father are the same.” In this regard, “the institutions of patriarchy and autocratic government become deeply rooted and indivisible.”⁵⁸ The self-cultivation expounded by Confucianism “is not what allows people to fulfill their individual natures but rather that which makes them sacrifice their individuality. The first step in sacrificing one’s individuality is to perfect one’s filial behavior, for the ‘loyalty’ of the ruler-minister relationship is entirely an extension of the ‘filiality’ of the father-son relationship.”⁵⁹ This demonstrates that the depth of New Culture criticism not only surpassed that of earlier people but also specifically illuminated individual liberation for the Chinese people. It was first necessary to escape from the bounds of the traditional family and the clan system to seize freedom and to obtain the rights and status of independence and equality. The social significance of enlightenment surpassed the actual debate over the national polity, and it delivered millions of intellectuals, especially students and youth, from the mists of delusion.

Statistics reveal that registered students in the modern schools totaled nearly 4 million by 1916 while teachers totaled about 300,000, and more than 100,000

students were studying abroad. However, those who occupied the center of power of the political culture at this time were mostly transitional scholars, and when students studying abroad returned home, few could find employment. The prospects of students became a major social problem. Most of the new intellectuals who had absorbed Western culture and had specialized skills did not want to return home to succeed to the ancestral profession and produce heirs for the family line. The enlightenment movement inspired them to form new civic associations and to take the route of independence and autonomy and of saving the nation and the people. These associations—designated under such rubrics as literary, theatrical, physical education, new people, respect for work, companionship, liberation, and so forth—were already commonplace in colleges and middle schools before the May 4 Movement exploded. The May 4 Movement, provoked by the question of the sovereignty over Shandong at the Paris Peace Talks, reached its climax combining enlightenment thought and national salvation.

The immediate impact of the May 4 Movement was to put so much pressure on the government that it did not dare to sign the Paris Peace Treaty. The government also fired the three traitorous officials who had made concessions to Japan. The strength of the movement was derived neither from the old parties nor their leaders and members; rather, it stemmed from an unprecedented democratic patriotic movement which spread to every large and middle-sized Chinese city by uniting workers and merchants with students at the heart of a series of student strikes, worker strikes, and commercial boycotts. The citizenship consciousness of students, workers, and merchants was plainly raised during the May 4 Movement. In accepting various kinds of new intellectual trends and sweeping away the bonds of traditional ethics and morality, the various kinds of new civic associations evolved into a movement to reconstruct society.

Students were the vanguard of this new enlightenment. In the argot of the day, youth is like the spring, like the dawn, like emerging sprouts. In fact, this generation of youth had mainly received the new learning, and they were little influenced by Confucian morality. In middle schools and colleges students studied the natural sciences and the theory of evolution, and they shopped around all kinds of foreign ideologies and intellectual systems with great interest. Even before May 4, much had already occurred—ranging from the free societies of Beijing University to the clubs and journals of middle schools. After May 4, the emergence of a united association of students from middle schools and colleges in Beijing encouraged student associations to move beyond their schools and unite with other social groups to become social activists. The Chinese Youth Study Society (Shaonian Zhongguo xuehui) was a large association of new-style intellectuals from different professions which combined students, teachers, professors, reporters, scientific researchers, and others. Its members spread to many provinces and cities, as well as Southeast Asia, Britain, America, Japan, Germany, and other countries. It was influential, albeit loosely organized. The students worshiped liberty, and every ideology had its followers. Socialism was the

freshest and most fashionable of these, though few people really understood it. Most chose to work in the field of education, which was considered the most effective way to save the nation, as the enlightenment movement taught.

The Work-Study Mutual Aid Association (Gongdu huzhutuan), which was organized by high school and college students in Beijing and several southern cities, encouraged a lifestyle of “breaking away from school,” “breaking away from family,” and “breaking away from marriage.” The students then found places to live in cities and combined work and study, pooling their resources and distributing them according to need. They tried to create a kind of idealistic “embryo of the new society” which would then grow into the entire society. Their experiments failed after a few months, demonstrating that a utopian socialism which was overeager to see results could not save the country. However, their independent and autonomous mind-set was unprecedented. The resolution to break with tradition did not decline at all with the failure of the association. Students endlessly pursued their inquiries through a profusion of such groups as the Russian Research Association, the Marxism Research Association, the Commoners’ Education Society, the European Diligent-Work Frugal-Study Society, and the like.⁶⁰

Workers were also waking up to the situation. Before May 4, workers had participated in such political struggles as boycotts of Japanese goods. After May 4, inspired by the student movement, the patriotic enthusiasm of the working class intensified so that 60,000 to 70,000 Shanghai workers went on strike. To a degree, they broke away from the traditional customs of the crafts guilds to carry out an unprecedented and united political strike.

Commercial associations were changing as well. Commercial associations had outnumbered political parties since the Republic had been founded, but they focused on business concerns and did not stick their noses into politics. Shanghai’s “three strikes” of students, workers, and merchants on 3 June 1919 began with the students mobilizing some small shopkeepers and, together with the small and middle-sized national capitalists, they effected a commercial boycott. The big capitalists tried to compromise but could not affect the situation. The majority of shop workers also joined the commercial boycott. The transformation of commercial associations can be seen in two telegrams. A telegram from the Beijing General Chamber of Commerce to the government said, “Water can either support a boat or sink it. Once the popular spirit has risen, repression truly cannot prevent it from overflowing all banks. Word of strikes and boycotts has provoked responses in every province while the capital remains agitated, and general conditions appear unstable.”⁶¹ The Tianjin General Chamber of Commerce telegraphed, “It seems that tens of thousands of Tianjin dock workers are now agitated; if a solution is not reached immediately and the situation hardens, then the resulting crisis will surpass the commercial boycott.”⁶² Judging from their immediate impact, these two telegrams finally forced the Beijing government to resolve to fire the three high officials implicated in dealing with Japan.

The government also sent a copy of its discharge notice to Tianjin to “notify the public and urge that the markets be reopened.”⁶³

The intellectuals and students, who had accepted every kind of new intellectual trend, were deeply influenced by the theory of the sacredness of labor. Moreover, when they saw the strength of the workers and urban residents in the June 3 movement they began to move from liberation of the self toward liberation of the collectivity. A few people urgently sought a route toward the “basic rebuilding of society.” Because the new intellectuals of the May 4 period followed different ideologies, they took different routes; however, the concept of a democratic nation and the consciousness of an autonomous citizenry attained unprecedented development.

Conclusion

Citizenship consciousness, as well as the rights and duties of Chinese citizens encoded in law, was transplanted from the West. However, all this was difficult to reconcile with China’s traditional political institutions and culture. People whose mind-set revolved around emperors completely repudiated citizenship consciousness, not to mention the political institutions of citizenship. People used to being subjects were not only unfamiliar with the basic concepts of citizenship but also did not know how to be citizens. The emergence of chaos was therefore inevitable during certain historical epochs. The problem did not stem from chaos but whether the people would learn how to be citizens. Chinese progressives made a lot of sacrifices in their struggles to become citizens, and the citizenship consciousness of the Chinese made marked progress under the direction of these progressives.

To organize civic associations and political parties is the right of citizens and also represents the practice of citizens’ rights. Modern parties and associations moreover served as key schools for educating citizens. The historical era from the late nineteenth century to the May 4 period can verify this proposition.

As they developed, however, Chinese political parties also acquired their own characteristics. In modern China social contradictions have been extremely sharp. Since these contradictions proved unresolvable, a number of parties took up arms to resolve their contradictions by force. This was a historical inevitability. However, it also produced serious side effects; namely, parties rose above society and above the citizenry. This can be seen in Chiang Kai-shek’s notion of a single ideology, a single party, and a single leader. When the party rose above society and citizens, this bore out Chen Duxiu’s wise remark: “To have only a single party is imperial thinking.” The relationship between political parties and citizens is a critical historical problem which still awaits serious thought and research in China. To learn how to be citizens, it is crucial to open up parties and associations to the citizens themselves.

Notes

Translated by Peter Zarrow. Notes are the original author's unless otherwise indicated.

1. *Qin Shihuang benji* (The annals of Qin Shihuang), *Shiji* (The records of the historian), *Zhonghua shuju*, p. 245. [The six directions are north, south, east, west, and up and down.—Trans.]
2. The “three bonds” refer to the hierarchical relationships between emperor and minister, parents and children, and husband and wife—Trans.
3. *Guanzi*, *Zhonghua shuju* (Siku beiyao, ed.), *juan* 20, chapter 64, p. 164; and *juan* 10, chapter 36, p. 89.
4. *Makesi Engesi quanji* (The collected works of Marx and Engels), vol. 26 (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1979), p. 679.
5. Liang Qichao, “Gaige qiyuan” (The origins of reform), appendix to *Wuxu zhengbian ji* (An account of the 1898 reforms) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1954).
6. Li Si was prime minister to Qin Shihuang, emperor of the Qin state that first united China in 22 B.C.—Trans.
7. Literally, “the six classics,” referring to the sacred texts of the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing*), the *Book of Documents* (*Shujing*), the *Book of Poetry* (*Shijing*), the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu*), and the *Record of the Rites* (*Liji*), as well as the lost *Book of Music* (*Yuejing*)—Trans.
8. Literally, “the five masters,” referring to Neo-Confucianism, specifically Zhou Dunyi, Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi, Zhang Zai, and Zhu Xi of the Song dynasty (960–1279).—Trans.
9. Yan Fu, “Jiuwang juelun” (Saving the country), in *Yan Fu ji* (Collected works of Yan Fu), vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), p. 52.
10. Yan Fu, “Lun shibian zhi ji” (The extreme point of change), in *ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 1–5.
11. Yan Fu, “Jiuwang juelun,” in *ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 40–57.
12. Yan Fu, “Tianyanlun” (Evolution), in *ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 1317–98. [This was a translation with commentary of Thomas Huxley’s 1893 “Evolution and Ethics.”—Trans.]
13. Hu Hanmin, “Shu Houguan Yanshi zuijin zhengjian” (The recent political opinions of Yan Fu), *Minbao* (People’s journal), no. 2.
14. Zhang Yufa, “Qingji de lixian tuanti” (The constitutionalist associations of the Qing dynasty), p. 114.
15. Liang Qichao, “Kang Youwei zhuan” (Biography of Kang Youwei), in *Wuxu bianfa* (The 1898 reforms), vol. 4, p. 11.
16. Liang Qichao, “Sheng yu si,” in *Qingyi bao quanbian* (Complete edition of the journal of disinterested criticism), vol. 4, p. 111. [Tang Caichang, an associate of Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei, led a failed uprising against the government in 1900.—Trans.]
17. *Shiwu bao*, *Qingyi bao*, *Guowen bao*—Trans.
18. *Shiwu bao* (Current affairs), vol. 10, p. 621.
19. *Ibid.*, vol. 19, p. 1250.
20. “Nanxue hui xu” (Preface to the southern study society), in *ibid.*, vol. 51.
21. *Xiangxue bao* (Hunan learning), vol. 28.
22. A number of literati protest groups arose in the late sixteenth century in opposition to government policies—Trans.
23. “Zhengdang lun” (Political parties), *Qingyi bao*, vol. 78.
24. “Zhengdang lun” (Political parties), *Shiwu bao*, vol. 17.
25. Liang Qichao, “Jinggao zhengdang yu zhengdang yuan” (A warning to parties and party members), in *Yinbingshi heji, wenji* (Collected essays from the ice-drinker’s studio).

26. "Zhengdang lun" (Political parties), *Zhenglun* (Political discussions), no. 1.
27. *Qingyi bao*, no. 79.
28. *Xinmin congbao* (New people's miscellany), no. 92.
29. *Huang Xing ji* (Collected works of Huang Xing) (Zhonghua shuju, 1982), p. 468.
30. *Sun Zhongshan xuanji* (Selected works of Sun Yat-sen) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), vol. 2, p. 468.
31. *Liang Qichao xuanji* (Selected works of Liang Qichao) (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1984), p. 625.
32. Xie Bin, "Minguo zhengdang shi" (History of political parties in the Republic), *Jindai baihai*, no. 6, p. 34.
33. Shan Zai, "The parties of the Republic's first year," *Guoshi*, no. 1.
34. Zhang Yufa, *Minguo chunian de zhengdang* (Political parties in the early Republic) (Taibei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, 1985), p. 33.
35. *Minguo liunian Zhongguo nianjian* (Chinese yearbook of 1917), Taiwan, p. 596.
36. Zhang Yufa, *Minguo chunian de zhengdang*, p. 33.
37. Li Xin, ed., *Zhonghua Minguo shi* (History of the Chinese Republic), vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), p. 178.
38. *Shishi xinbao* (New journal of current events), November 1, 1912.
39. "Jinggao xuanju ren" (A warning to the voters), *Shenbao* 1 (November 1913).
40. "Xuanju ren xinli zhi shice" (A survey of voter psychology), *Shenbao*, September 5, 1912.
41. Li Jannong, *Wuxu yihou sanshidian zhengzhishi* (A political history of the thirty years following 1898) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), p. 163.
42. Liang Qichao, "Zhongguo liguo da fangzhen" (The right direction for establishing the Chinese nation), *Yinbingshi heji, wenji, juan* 28, p. 67.
43. Ibid., p. 30.
44. Sun Yat-sen, *Sun Zhongshan quanji* (The complete works of Sun Yat-sen), vol. 2, p. 408.
45. Huang Yuanyong, *Yuansheng yizhu*, vol. 1, p. 4.
46. Liang Qichao, *Yinbingshi heji, wenji, juan* 29, p. 21.
47. Wu Guanyin, "Jinhou zhengzhi zhi qushi" (Political trends of the future), *Yongyan*, no. 17.
48. Sun Yat-sen, *Sun Zhongshan quanji*, vol. 2, p. 555.
49. Liang Qichao, "Zhongguo liguo zhi da fangzhen."
50. Cited in Zhang Yufa, *Minguo chunian de zhengdang*, p. 16.
51. *Aiguo baihua bao* (Vernacular journal of patriotism), November 5, 1914.
52. Liang Qichao, "Yizai suowei guoti wenti zhe" (How strange! The so-called problem of the national polity), *Dagong bao* (Tianjin), September 7, 1915.
53. *New Youth* was originally named *Youth Magazine* (Qingnian zazhi), but was renamed *Xin qingnian* in 1916, under which name it is better known. It is generally felt to have captured the spirit of the New Culture (1915) and May 4 (1919) Movements.—Trans.
54. Qian Xuantong, "Baohu yanzhu he huanhui renyan" (Protect your eyeballs and take back your vision), *Xin qingnian* 5, no. 6.
55. Li Dazhao, *Li Dazhao wenji* (The collected works of Li Dazhao), vol. 2 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1955), p. 95. [Kang Youwei and Zhang Xun, a Qing officer who had refused to cut off his queue after the Revolution, supported the brief restoration to the throne of the last Qing emperor, Puyi, in 1917.—Trans.]
56. Chen Duxiu, "Yijiu yiliu nian" (1916), *Xin qingnian* 1, no. 5.
57. Chen Duxiu, "Wuren zhi zuihou juewu" (My final awakening), *Xin qingnian* 1, no. 6.

58. Wu Yu, “Jiazu zhidu wei zhuanzhi zhuyi zhi genju lun” (The family system is the basis for autocracy), *Xin qingnian* 2, no. 6.
59. Li Dazhao, “You jingjishang jieshi Zhongguo jindai sixiang biandong zhi yuanyin” (The economic causes behind intellectual change in modern China), *Xin qingnian* 7, no. 2.
60. Eluosi yanjiuhui, Makesi zhuyi yanjiuhui, Pingmin jiaoyutuan, Lü’Ou qingong jianxue hui—Trans.
61. *Shenbao*, June 12, 1919.
62. *Chenbao*, June 13, 1919.
63. *Gongyanbao*, June 11, 1919.

Nationalism, Citizenship, and the Old Text/New Text Controversy in Late Nineteenth Century China

Anne Cheng

Let me first make a preliminary disavowal: I am by no means a specialist of the nineteenth century, nor even of the Qing dynasty. My research work has been dealing mainly with ancient, and more particularly Han China. In the course of my research work, I have been confronted with the so-called Old Text/New Text controversy that had some bearing on the classical studies (*jingxue*) of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220). What has always intrigued me, however, is the apparently anachronistic revival of that controversy 1,800 years later. This revival, which started in the late eighteenth century, was to become a prominent intellectual feature of the reformist movement one century later.

Terms such as nationalism, liberalism, and citizenship were obviously coined by specifically Western political theory. Referring to such notions is therefore tantamount to raising the issue of the confrontation between China and the West that began to take a dramatic turn in the nineteenth century. However, as Jerome Grieder reminds us, “19th century Confucianism was by no means merely, or even primarily, a reactionary and defensive response to the challenge of Western ideas. Not until late in the century, in fact, did the Chinese perceive an intellectual dimension to the Western threat.”¹ So the great confrontation between China and the West has to take into account the question of how Chinese intellectuals came to terms with their own cultural tradition. One channel through which tradition continued to impinge on the minds of nineteenth-century intellectuals was what Chang Hao calls “internal dialogues,” by which he means “intellectual discussions of a special nature that went on in the Chinese tradition over the

centuries.”² The political and institutional crises of the late nineteenth century must, therefore, be placed in a “culturalist” perspective, within which such “internal dialogues” as the Confucian commitment to statecraft and the Old Text/New Text controversy play a decisive role. Chang Hao emphasizes in this respect that the practical orientation of the “Statecraft School” predicated the onset of the Western impact, which began to gather momentum around the turn of the nineteenth century, and especially after the Taiping rebellion. Benjamin A. Elman has, to my mind, shown convincingly that the New Text revival represented a new intellectual strand that originated as an alternative form of political discourse as early as the late eighteenth century: “What is clear is that New Text Confucianism did not arise in the Qing period as a rationalization for Westernization. Rather, New Text studies arose as respectable Han-Learning scholarship, a slogan synonymous with evidential research, in mainstream centers of learning before being linked to problems of reform in the 19th century. Moreover, New Text scholars promoted traditional forms of Confucian reform before they initiated a radical call for Westernization.”³ This is one way of arguing that the revival of New Text has to be understood in the light of long-term historical developments specific to late imperial China, which means that the revival as a response to Western domination was a later and superimposed element.

But the fact remains that it was ultimately the growing influence and objective superiority of the West that induced the late Qing thinkers to reassess their own tradition to the point of undermining it, thereby posing the question of identity and continuity in the face of an external and powerful challenge. As Chang Hao puts it: “For many Chinese intellectuals, the crisis of order was not just the disintegration of the sociopolitical order as a result of Western expansion, but also a disruption of the traditional universe of meanings, to the extent that the basic Chinese orientational symbolism was being questioned and challenged.”⁴ How did the reassessment of tradition, begun as early as the late eighteenth century, eventually lead to its overturning? Such an evolution shows the ultimate limits of the elasticity of the Confucian tradition, which had hitherto appeared to be able to digest alien intellectual contents (even Buddhism, to a certain extent), but did not seem to be able to survive the confrontation with the West. The Confucian tradition does appear to have been rich and varied enough—with such a long history and so many different strands—to be able to come up every time with a long-forgotten trick to face new crises. That was the basic idea of the New Text revival. Our purpose is to see how, in the “renewal” process of a 2,000-year-old strand of Confucianism, the fresh interpretations of already existing themes were brought to the breaking point by questions which not only came from outside the tradition (as Buddhism had done previously) but also threatened the continuity of Chinese political institutions (unlike Buddhism, which never effectively impinged on the institutional level). Where exactly was the breaking point? How far could the Confucian tradition be stretched to respond to Western challenge?

The rise of modern nationalism in the late nineteenth century raises a number of new questions. In what way was the Western notion of citizenship grafted onto the longstanding issue of gentry dissent against authoritarian imperial rule? In such a context, did the Old Text/New Text controversy have something to say about the idea of the citizen? How did the Chinese literati, turning into modern “intellectuals” in the process, transform their political priorities from the painful memory of the Manchu overthrow of Ming rule to the reaction to Western superiority? Since the 1644 takeover, the opposition to the Manchus had been nourished as much by a feeling of cultural identity as by ethnic Han chauvinism. Did this anti-Manchu resentment represent the same kind of nationalism as the resentment against Western superiority?

This leads us to yet another question: what exactly is the relationship between nationalism and citizenship in Chinese terms? It seems that the question, prominent during the first half of the Qing dynasty, of how anti-Manchu and anti-authoritarian sentiments combined in the minds of the literati, became by the latter half of the dynasty: how did reaction to Western domination combine with the former resentment against Manchu and authoritarian rule? More specifically, in what way were such issues formulated in the context of the reassessment of traditional culture?

The Old Text vs. New Text Controversy in Historical Context

It may be relevant here to recall the main lines of the controversy as it presented itself during the Han. The so-called “New Text” (*jinwen*) Classics were the versions recorded in the clerical script (*lishu*) current in the early Han, a calligraphy instituted after the unification of writing forms and the burning of the books during the Qin dynasty. During the middle of the second century B.C., however, versions of the Classics written in pre-Han styles of calligraphy were purportedly discovered in Confucius’s old residence in Lu (in today’s Shandong Province). They were subsequently placed in the imperial archives. According to Former Han accounts, these Old Text Classics were recorded in ancient script (*guwen*)—that is, various forms of ancient seal script (*zhuanshu*) in use during the Zhou dynasty. Because the Old Text Classics were written in more ancient calligraphic forms, their defenders claimed priority for those versions over the New Text Classics. The Old Text/New Text controversy, as it emerged during the Han, often tends to be seen nowadays through the lenses of the Qing revival—that is, as a violent struggle between two entrenched camps. However, what Han scholarship called *jinwen* and *guwen* were chiefly two aspects, among many others, of the multiplicity of variant readings and interpretations of the Confucian Classics.⁵

The Old Text school began to come into its own under the sponsorship of Liu Xin (32 B.C.?–A.D. 23) and Wang Mang (45 B.C.–A.D. 23) during the last years of the Former Han. Thereafter, though the New Texts were restored under Emperor

Guangwu (A.D. 25–57) to their earlier position of preeminence at court, the Old Text school continued to grow in influence. With the rising influence of the Old Text Classics from the latter part of the Han dynasty onwards, the New Text tradition, still represented by He Xiu in the Eastern Han,⁶ was to undergo a sixteen-century-long eclipse, from which it was to emerge only by the middle of the Qing dynasty, in the second half of the eighteenth century. There began at the time to be a gradual revival of interest in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu*), accompanied by the *Gongyang Commentary*,⁷ and other works of central importance in the New Text school.

This revival was the first real break with Neo-Confucianism, which had dominated the intellectual scene ever since the eleventh century. As early as the eighteenth century, some Qing scholars of the *kaozhengxue* (evidential research, lit. “search for evidence”)—otherwise known as the *Hanxue* (Han Learning)—felt the need to revive a tradition that was ancient enough to counterbalance the overpowering domination of the *lixue* inherited from the Song and the Ming. The two aspects of anti-Manchu opposition, ethnic and cultural, merged in the call for Han Learning, which dominated the intellectual scene in the eighteenth century by harking back to the Han era that contributed so much to the elaboration of the Chinese collective and cultural self-consciousness. The emergence of New Text Confucianism is in many ways a continuation of this call to return to the Han foundations of classicism and philology. But the cultural issue is also to be understood, as usual in the Chinese tradition, in political terms. The origins of the New Text revival during the Qing dynasty should be placed in the context of longstanding political battles to control the interpretation of the Classics in the imperial state.

It is worth noting that the Qing New Text attempts to reassess the whole scriptural tradition focused mainly on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. In the first place, the *Chunqiu* was at the very center of the disputes over the interpretations to be given of the Classics during the Han. The so-called *jinwen* vs. *guwen* controversy was actually sparked by and focused primarily on the degree of consideration that should be given to the *Zuo Commentary* on the *Chunqiu* promoted by Liu Xin under the reign of Emperor Ai (6 B.C.–A.D. 1). After the formation of imperially sanctioned Confucianism during the Former Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 8), politics in succeeding dynasties was usually expressed through the language of the Classics or the Dynastic Histories. To borrow Benjamin A. Elman’s terms: “As repositories of the wisdom of antiquity, the Classics of *Change*, *Documents*, *Poetry* and *Rites* were regarded by Confucians as creations of the sage-kings. The *Spring and Autumn Annals*, accepted as the only Classic composed by Confucius himself, thus became the textual lens through which the Master’s vision of history was interpreted. Although all Classics eventually became embroiled in the New Text vs. Old Text controversy, the task of unraveling Confucius’ legacy focused on the *Annals*.⁸”

Being at once a Classic and a set of historical annals, the *Chunqiu* moved to

the center of the controversy created when the New Text was revived by the late eighteenth-century literati of the Changzhou school, such as Zhuang Cunyu and Liu Fenglu, to oppose the mainstream of Hanxue scholars. The latter emphasized history, following the well-known slogan “The Six Classics are all histories” (*liu jing jie shi*), made famous in the late eighteenth century by the historian Zhang Xuecheng (1738–1801).⁹ Until the mid-eighteenth century, the *Chunqiu* had been viewed chiefly as a sort of guidebook of historical precedents, whereas New Text scholars wanted to put the stress again on the eternal meaning of the Classics, while avoiding to resort to Song Learning. They alleged that much of what had once been considered orthodox by Song and Ming Neo-Confucians and Qing *kaozheng* scholars was in fact based on Old Text sources fabricated by Confucian scholars during the reign of the “Han usurper,” Wang Mang. New Text advocates turned instead to the Gongyang Commentary on the *Chunqiu* because it was the only New Text commentary on one of the Classics that had survived intact from the Former Han dynasty.

At the same time, having the twofold status of Classic and history, the *Chunqiu* was at the junction between canonical and political discourse. During the Han, of the Five Confucian Classics, the *Chunqiu* was already perceived as the scripture that was most closely associated with Han legitimacy. Backed up by a number of apocrypha (*weishu*), it was said to have been composed by Confucius in prophetic prevision of the rule by the Liu clan. At the same time, the *Chunqiu* stood as a model for political criticism within which Confucius himself had measured his contemporaries and envisioned a new order to come. This was the view expressed by the Gongyang Commentary which supported the former Han New Text school’s portrayal of Confucius as a charismatic visionary and institutional reformer—an “uncrowned king” (*suwang*) who founded new institutions for the future much as the ancient sage-kings from Yao to the Duke of Zhou had.

The New Text Revival in the Qing

The New Text revival initiated by the Changzhou literati must be placed in the more general context of “evidential research” and Han Learning, but it should be underlined that its content was recast in favor of reformism. The precursor of the New Text revival is generally considered to be Zhuang Cunyu (1719–1788) who, along with Kong Guangsen (1752–1786), was one of the first to regard himself as a *jinwen* scholar. Zhuang appeared to be less concerned with textual issues than with the political implications supposedly contained in the *Chunqiu*. In Zhuang’s view, the *Chunqiu* was a call to reform the present in the name of the past (*tuogu gaizhi*). *Tuogu gaizhi* actually means looking to the Classics for political justification, sanctifying practice in terms of precedent. To use Elman’s phrase, “19th century successors to the Changzhou New Text initiative more and more turned from ‘interpreting the past’ (*tuogu*) to ‘reforming the present’ (*gaizhi*).”¹⁰

Zhuang’s grandson Liu Fenglu (1776–1829) began to introduce a polemical

and political dimension which was to remain very much present down to the end of the nineteenth century. The decisive role played by Liu Fenglu was to join Zhuang Cunyu's activist Gongyang theory to the intellectualist Han Learning philology. The revival of New Text Confucianism in fact made use of philology to implement a political agenda. Liu openly applied the principles he derived from his classical studies to practical affairs (*tongjing zhiyong*—the phrase is Wei Yuan's), thereby setting the tone for the use of Gongyang ideas as a theoretical basis for reform by the next generation of New Texters.

By reasserting that Confucius was a sage who used history to declare classical truths, Liu Fenglu was in fact rekindling the Han dynasty Old Text vs. New Text controversy in a fully polarized, but also philologically and historically reconstructed form. Starting from textual matters, Liu Fenglu was the first to revive the *jinwen* position and to open fire on the opposite tradition epitomized by Liu Xin (32 B.C.?—A.D. 23). From a deliberately New Text standpoint, Liu Fenglu sparked off a longstanding controversy by underlining the frequent discrepancies between the Zuo Commentary and the text of the *Chunqiu* on which it was supposed to comment. Liu explained these discrepancies by claiming that the original Zuo, which he dated back to the Warring States, had suffered from the modifications and additions of Liu Xin.¹¹ According to the Qing *jinwen* revivalist position, Liu Xin, together with his father Liu Xiang, had been the first librarian ever to have access to the rare and hitherto unknown documents of the Secret Archives, and was therefore in a favorable position to serve the interests of the usurper Wang Mang. Liu Fenglu argued that during Wang Mang's interregnum (A.D. 9–23), Liu Xin manipulated the *Zhouli* (Rituals of Zhou) and another text simply known as the *Zuoshi Chunqiu* (Master Zuo's *Spring and Autumn Annals*), which he made up as a commentary to the canonical *Chunqiu*, in order to discredit the New Text school of the Former Han dynasty and to support Wang Mang's usurpation of power.

Liu Fenglu was thus throwing even further doubt concerning the troubling origins of the Old Text versions of the Classics accepted since the Later Han and by the predominant Han Learning tradition. For New Text scholars, it was essential to trace the authenticity of the Han Classics back to the period *before* Liu Xin's alleged manipulations in the service of Wang Mang. Liu Fenglu's controversial analysis was the starting point of an all-out attack against Liu Xin, which was later to be taken up by the rise of New Text scholarship in Guangzhou via Liao Ping (1852–1932) and brought to a paroxysm by Kang Youwei in the 1890s. The Old Text/New Text controversy may be said to have radicalized as the *jinwen* revival turned out to be compatible with new ideas from the West and ultimately with radical reformism.

New Text and the Spirit of Reform

The New Text of the Han is the earliest form of imperially sanctioned ideology based on the interpretation of the Classics. It may appear as a paradox that New

Text Confucianism, which reflected the transition period when China emerged from a coterie of feudal states into a highly centralized empire, should have been taken up centuries later to embody a spirit of radical reform, in which the Chinese were forced by their growing contacts with the outside world to accept the fact that their country was neither the whole nor the center of that world, but simply one among many different nations. In view of the Chinese tradition, one important question is: in what terms did the Qing New Text revivalism conceive of the nature of imperial power and of its relation to scriptural authority?

First, it must be said that the image of Confucius, the central reference for scriptural authority, underwent considerable change. Confucius has been thought throughout the Chinese classical tradition to have played a fundamental role in articulating through the Classics—and especially the *Chunqiu*—the guidelines both for political authority and for dissent against that authority. In the process of radicalization that went on during the Qing, the image of Confucius turned successively from the Song Learning moralist into the Han Learning teacher, finally to evolve into the New Text visionary prophet. In the *kaozheng* rationalistic and historical trend, Confucius appeared as a mere historian, and a rather poor one at that. In contradistinction, Liu Fenglu reasserted the Former Han vision of Confucius as an “uncrowned king.” The New Text image of Confucius as a sage-king who founded new institutions for the future carried a heightened outer-institutional interpretation of the Confucian idea of moral order, and may be said to imply the question of the intellectual’s commitment in Chinese terms. This may have aided the movement of early Chinese intelligentsia like Kang Youwei or Zhang Binglin from the traditional Confucian sense of commitment to the modern Western sense of the intellectual’s *engagement*.

One other aspect was the rediscovery by Qing *jinwen* revivalists of the Former Han synthesis of rituals and laws, in which the only alternative to the universal power of law was the particularizing authority of ritual—the universalism of law (its refusal to make exceptions) being tempered only by the particularism of rituals (which insist on differential treatment according to personal status, relationship, and social circumstance). Given the decisive part played by Legalism in the formation of imperial Confucianism during the Former Han, the Gongyang tradition had established a relation between the *Chunqiu* and law (*fa*) by paying special attention to the presence in the *Chunqiu* of a systematic terminological and stylistic framework for making legal judgments. As Thomas Metzger remarks, “the fact that so much law, especially in the Qing period, was conceptualized as *li* (precedent) merged respect for law with respect for the hallowed past and the revered decisions of the imperial ancestors.”¹² Thus, the “reformist” political agenda of the early nineteenth-century New Texters was still very much based on reference to the wisdom of the past contained in the Classics.

The call for reformism within the New Text revival originated in the century-old theme of adaptation to changing times. Qing New Text reformers made

much of the notion of *quan* (“weighing circumstances”) that was central in the Gongyang Commentary interpretation of the *Chunqiu* as a means of synthesizing ritual and law, Classic and History, and was hence a symptom of the “Legalization of Confucianism” or “Confucianization of Legalism” in the Former Han.¹³ The implications of this link between Confucian classicism and Legalist practice were to be further developed by Wei Yuan, Gong Zizhen, and, ultimately, late Qing reformers, who came to recognize that traditional stopgap measures could not solve such problems as population increase, bureaucratic corruption, and foreign incursions. The revival of New Text Confucianism thus came to be closely associated with statecraft discourse (*jingshi*). The latter in itself did not constitute a “revival” in the nineteenth century: there was a continuous tradition of routine system maintenance (flood control, bandit suppression, calendar adjustment, institutional change), kept up by elite office-holding families and lineages. For instance, Wei Yuan (1794–1856), Liu Fenglu’s student and follower, is well known for his writings on such practical topics as maritime defense, taxation, salt monopoly and water control. Like most adherents to the school of statecraft, Wei Yuan made emphatically explicit the connection between Confucian ends and governmental means. What was new in the nineteenth century, however, was the overwhelming reformism of the traditional statecraft discourse.

But, as noted by Elman, “given the ‘constitutional’ framework of the Qing empire, whereby the Classics remained the rhetorical guide in political matters, any reformist initiative had to find its historical precedent in the Classics.”¹⁴ The New Text revival eventually meant a revival of political consciousness among the scholars, but still expressed in classical terms. When the Changzhou literati revived the *jinwen* tradition, they were attempting to formulate a new political agenda while still referring to conceptions that had characterized the New Text Confucianism of the Han. Liu Fenglu, in the first half of the nineteenth century, was still referring back to Dong Zhongshu’s Former Han political theory grounded in cosmological conceptions. But, as noted by Chang Hao, it was only in the last quarter of the nineteenth century that skepticism about the traditional institutional order gradually penetrated from the periphery toward the center: “This skepticism cast doubt not only on the functional effectiveness of the institutional order, but also on its moral legitimacy.”¹⁵ The moral legitimacy of the cosmological kingship, in which the Son of Heaven was seen as a sort of cosmological lynchpin functioning at the center of the world and radiating a universal authority on earth, was then being brought into doubt by the parliamentary model. By undermining the idea that the Classics conveyed a set of eternal truths and by stressing the notion of change, Legalist-minded Confucians were in fact bringing into doubt the very canonicity that had been attributed to the Classics by the whole Confucian tradition: if the Classics could be doubted, anything could be doubted. This would inevitably yield the following conclusion: if the imperial system could be doubted, anything could be doubted.

Kang Youwei and the Climax of New Text Reformism

It remained for Kang Youwei (1858–1927) to transform the increasingly radical and politicized New Text revival into a rationale for comprehensive political reform. It was in fact Kang who gave the Old Text/New text controversy a definitely radical twist by making the century-old *guwen* tradition responsible for all of China's institutional ills, and especially for its incapacity to ward off Western aggressions. It was therefore urgent to reassess thoroughly the whole of Chinese classical tradition to rescue the nation from total alienation. The *jinwen* revival can be said to have reached a political climax in the 1890s, when Kang Youwei briefly rose to national prominence in Peking.

What is interesting is that, whenever Kang attempted to “translate” Western liberal ideals into Chinese terms, he naturally turned to the New Text tradition. It was, for instance, within the Former Han Confucian world view of the unity of heaven and man that Kang placed such notions as individual liberty, equality, and democracy. In the same way, Kang read an unilinear evolutionary view into the New Text interpretation of the *Chunqiu* which was essentially cyclical in nature, thereby reorienting the whole Confucian perspective toward the future into a progressive design.¹⁶ Kang's program for reform urged the inauguration of parliamentary forms and constitutional monarchy which Kang judged most appropriate and effective for the Age of Rising Peace.¹⁷

In his first study dated 1891, the *Xinxue weijing kao* (Examination of the Forged Classics of the Xin dynasty scholarship),¹⁸ Kang challenged the authenticity of certain texts of the Confucian canon (especially the *Zuo Commentary*), texts which he wished to see superseded by others that would be more “exploitable” (especially the *Gongyang Commentary*). Kang Youwei was the first prominent reformer to put the blame on the Old Text school for being a potential obstacle to any spirit of reform by its conception of orthodoxy, leading, in Kang's view, to the sclerosis and sterility of the Chinese intellectual tradition. Like Liu Fenglu and Wei Yuan, Kang relied heavily on earlier philological reconstructions of the Former Han New Text school in his attacks against the Han scholar and imperial librarian Liu Xin, who had allegedly forged the *Zuozhuan* and the *Zhouli*, two major texts in the Old Text tradition, with the intention of discrediting the authentic *jinwen* versions. In his preface to the *Xinxue weijing kao*, Kang makes the following allegation:

Liu Xin was the first to produce counterfeited texts and to throw the system of the sages into disorder. The spreading of these forged classics and the usurpation of the line of Confucius was completed by Zheng Xuan [127–200, one of the most outstanding commentators on the Classics of the Later Han period]. For the vast expanse of two thousand years . . . all the reverent strictness of the systems of rituals and music of the rulers of twenty dynasties has respected the forged scriptures as the models of the sage.¹⁹

The Chinese intellectuals, confronted with the Western challenge, had to reassess the whole of their cultural tradition, which involved primarily a reassessment of the source of that tradition, the father-figure of Confucius. In his *Kongzi gaizhi kao* (On Confucius as a reformer),²⁰ Kang drew on his revised Confucian canon to give a New Text image of Confucius as a progressive, not a conservative, in his own day. Kang Youwei's mystical portrayal of Confucius as a political reformer and a "religious leader" (*jiaozhu*) similar to the Buddha, Christ, or Muhammad, was probably the last attempt to present Confucius as the greatest saint of all ages and to legitimate the cosmological conception of kingship as a mystique: "Before the Han dynasty everyone knew that Confucius was a religious leader who had reformed institutions. . . . In what does Confucius' (character) as a religious leader and a supernaturally perspicacious Sage-King reside? I say, in the Six Scriptures. The Six Scriptures were all produced by Confucius . . . from which we may discern his achievement in dispelling disorder in the world and bringing about the Great Peace."²¹

Let us quote Kang's introduction to the *Kongzi gaizhi kao*:

Heaven, having pity for the many afflictions suffered by the men who live on this great earth, (caused) the Black Emperor to send down his semen so as to create a being who would rescue the people from their troubles—a being of divine intelligence, who would be a sage-king, a teacher for his age, a bulwark for all men, and a religious leader for the whole world.²² Born as he was in the Age of Disorder, he proceeded, on the basis of this disorder, to establish the pattern of the Three Ages, basing himself (initially) on those of his native state (of Lu), but stressing the idea of the one great unity that would (ultimately) bind together all parts of the great earth, far and near, large and small.²³

Here, Kang is seen to borrow freely from the Han dynasty apocrypha. Let us quote for example the *Chunqiu wei yan Kong tu* (Apocryphal treatise on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*: Expository Chart on Confucius):

On Confucius' breast there was a writing which said: "The act of instituting [a new dynasty] has been decided and the rule of the world has been transferred." Confucius was ten feet high and nine spans in circumference. Sitting, he was like a crouching dragon, and standing, like the Cowherd [constellation]. As one approached him he was like the Pleiades, and as one gazed upon him, like the Ladle. Sages are not born for nothing; they must surely institute something in order to reveal the mind of Heaven. Thus, Confucius, like a wooden-tongued bell [allusion to the *Analects*], instituted the laws for the world. . . . After the unicorn (*lin*) was caught, Heaven rained blood which formed into writing on the main gate [of the capital] of Lu, and which said: "Quickly prepare laws, for the sage Confucius will die; the Zhou [ruling house], Ji, will be destroyed; a comet will appear from the east. The government of the Qin will arise and will suddenly destroy the literary arts. But though the written records will then be dispersed, [the teachings of] Confucius will not be interrupted."

Kang Youwei was obviously appealing to a religious Confucian agenda, in the context of the less rationalistic and more messianic tendencies that characterized New Text Confucianism in the late Qing. And just as Confucius was exalted by Kang as the greatest saint and reformer of all times, Kang undoubtedly thought of himself as a sage and was hailed by all his fellow intellectuals and reformers as the “Martin Luther of Confucianism.”²⁴ Doubtless, Kang’s universalization of Confucius as the prophet of a new Confucian religion did, in fact, contain an element of de-Confucianization.

The *jinwen* revival had reached a political climax in the 1890s, but by 1899, with the failure of the “Hundred Days’ Reforms,” New Text was already *passé* as a political force, although it remained important among intellectuals and scholars as the ideology that had inspired the first constitutional movement in the history of China. Kang himself never lost his *jinwen* convictions as long as he lived: that the stages of progress were Confucian stages, and that the values of progress, modern values, were really values because the sage had once conceived them. But with his disciple Liang Qichao, Confucianism trailed off to its twentieth-century ruin: Liang insisted that what China needed was a definite break with Confucianism. In 1902, Liang abruptly ceased, in his reformist writings, to exhort his readers to care about the Classics, saying that in his thirtieth year he ceased discussion on the “false classics.”²⁵ According to Mark Elvin, “the first major published work within the central tradition of Chinese scholarship that broke free from scriptural Confucianism was (Liang’s) *Theory of a New Citizenry (Xinmin shuo)*,” written mostly during 1902 and 1903. Elvin claims that this work “may be taken as approximately marking the point at which scriptural Confucianism had died in the sense that it had lost its power to reproduce itself as a viable system of beliefs and values among the educated classes,” and as such, the *Xinmin shuo* may be regarded as “the foundation of later Chinese revolutionary thought.”²⁶

Through the revival of the *jinwen/guwen* controversy, we see the Chinese intellectuals of the early modern age settling their accounts with their own tradition. It is a well-known fact that, traditionally, Chinese thinkers harked back to a preferably remote past to drive home a point about contemporary matters, and more often than not with a political purport. As was clearly perceived by Gu Jiegang, who wrote the preface to his *Gu shi bian*, about ten years after Kang Youwei’s death, the New Text/Old Text controversy was entirely motivated by political reasons, which had very little to do with scholarly considerations:

I felt that their motives were political rather than academic; and that while they employed the methods of historical criticism, their real aim was the reformation of society. Their political program involved three steps: they aimed first to demolish the structure of earliest antiquity; second, to make plain that Confucius, in writing the Six Classics, read his own ideas back to a remote antiquity, in the hope of effecting social reforms; and third, to promote their own ideas of reform by citing Confucius as their example.²⁷

In fact, this controversy was to be periodically revived in varying contexts in later developments of Chinese modern history: it was understood in terms of an opposition between the “good” rationalistic approach attributed to the *guwen* by such scholars as Gu Jiegang, Hu Shi, Feng Youlan, and the “bad” superstitious approach assigned to the *jinwen*. Later, in the 1964 version of his *Zhongguo zhixue shi* (History of Chinese philosophy), Feng Youlan reinterpreted the opposition in terms of materialism (*guwen*) versus idealism (*jinwen*). The alleged opposition between the two traditions eventually came to appear liable to be reinterpreted indefinitely in terms of any kind of opposition, as it seemed to provide a convenient pair of pegs.

New Text and Nationalism

When New Text Confucianism reemerged in the late eighteenth century, after centuries of neglect, its advocates were retracing political patterns that had been raised and then rejected in the seventeenth century, when Manchu armies destroyed the Ming dynasty. The late Qing New Text revival found itself grafted onto the remonstrance (*qingyi*) undercurrent that reemerged at the turn of the nineteenth century. But this remonstrance spirit was still very much looking back to the late Ming Donglin model. During the Qianlong-Jiaqing transition (at the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century), there was a Donglin-style revival which was centered chiefly on the issue of factionalism as the only possible mode of gentry participation in political affairs. The need for a cultural revival was therefore closely linked with one of a political and ethnic nature, that of the Han sentiment associated with the last purely “Chinese” dynasty before the earliest “barbarian” incursions, with a glaring allusion to the Manchus and to such anti-Manchu thinkers as Wang Fuzhi who had commented that while the fall of Han and Tang represented only dynastic changes, the Mongols’ conquest of Song meant the destruction of civilization itself.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, it seems that the century-long “ethnic nationalism,” which was fed by resentment against the domination of China by the Manchu ethnic minority, was giving way to a new “reactive or state nationalism,” which arose largely as a reaction against imperialist aggression in China. How did these two fonts of nationalistic feeling relate to the specifically Chinese cultural criterion? In both cases, the real question is that of the intellectual alienation from traditional Chinese culture. As was noted by Joseph R. Levenson, the Chinese never viewed themselves as forming a nation in the Western sense: as *tianxia*, China *was* the world, both as a cosmic and a moral whole.²⁸ In such a conception, the notion of nationalism appears hardly relevant, unless it is related to that of cultural identity. The main thrust of the late Qing intellectuals’ effort was to reconstruct a coherent world order which was essentially universalistic. Although most thinkers of the period did have some commitment to the ideal of a national community, they did not appear to see nationalism as an end in itself.

The New Text view revived by the Changzhou school in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was essentially based on classical values. Traditionally, and especially since the Song, the *Chunqiu* had provided a convenient framework for the articulation of “proto-nationalistic” sentiments, from “Song loyalism” to Ming “Han chauvinism.” Liu Fenglu’s handling of foreign affairs, for example, was largely inspired by his thorough knowledge of the Gongyang tradition which harbored “a cultural vision of concentrically arranged internal and external groups of peoples, which carried over into the tribute system that was at the heart of the Confucian system of foreign affairs. Inner feudal states of the Chou dynasty had priority over their surrounding tribes and peripheral barbarians.... According to Liu, the *Chunqiu* implied that political status was culturally, not racially, defined. The transformation from barbarian ‘outsider’ status to Confucian ‘insider’ status was an ongoing process of cultural assimilation based on Chinese models of imperial benevolence.”²⁹

How did anti-Manchu political dissent, paired with ethnic nationalism, evolve into a new type of state nationalism? The change took place gradually, appearing in the interpretation of traditional terms. For instance, the efforts of Qin Ying (1743–1821), a partisan of the Qian-Jia Donglin revival, to legitimate literati groups, not as *dang* (“factions,” with its negative connotations), but as *qun* (“communities,” a term sanctioned by Confucius himself)³⁰ were picked up by late Qing New Text reformers such as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, who made the concept of *qun* the centerpiece for their stress on political renovation. Chang Hao sees in this debate over *qun* among the Chinese intellectuals in the 1890s “a growing need on the part of Chinese intellectuals to do something they probably had not done since the Axial Age of the late Chou, namely, to reexamine the institutional foundation of the Chinese sociopolitical order.”³¹ As was pointed out by Elman, “Kang Youwei, in his *Changxing xueji*, went on from where Qin Ying had left off to include a notion of ‘human community’ (*qun*) in his political proposals. Benevolence (*ren*) in concrete social terms was the mode in which humans associated with each other and formed communities, according to Kang. Under the rubric of ‘communities,’ Kang sought to legitimate gentry political organizations within the imperial system.”³² Taking up Liu Fenglu’s inspiration in the *Chunqiu*, Kang Youwei directed the culturalistic view toward a universalistic ideal: “Every person is born from Heaven. Therefore, he should not be regarded as a citizen of state (*guomin*) but as a citizen of Heaven (*tianmin*). Since everyone is born from Heaven, he should subordinate himself to Heaven. [Consequently] all people are independent and equal.”³³

In this commentary on Mencius, Kang is seen to be not an exclusive nationalist, but rather universalistic in his overall view. Chang Hao reminds us that “at the height of the reform movement in 1898, Liang Qichao wrote to his teacher [Kang Youwei], reminding him that their preoccupation with a political campaign should not lead them to forget that their ultimate goal is the universalistic ideal of spreading Confucian moral-spiritual teachings and saving the world

(*jiushi*), rather than the “particularistic” political goal of merely protecting China, the nation.”³⁴ Just like Liu Fenglu and Kang Youwei before him, Liang refers to the *Chunqiu*: “The *Chunqiu* was not for one country but for the world, not for one time but for eternity.”³⁵ At the same time, Liang gave Kang Youwei’s formulation of *qun* a central place in his own emphasis on political renovation. In an essay entitled *Shuo qun* (On community), Liang downplayed the moral aspects of benevolence and analyzed instead “the vital problems of political integration, political participation and legitimization, and the scope of the political community.”³⁶ In his Preface, Liang said: “There are the people of a nation and the people of the world. Western government is by the people of the nation; we have not yet attained to government by the people of the world. . . . In the Age of the Great Peace, far and near, great and small in the world will be one.”³⁷

Tan Sitong also joined in this universalistic strain: if man approached social questions with love—in its Chinese form *renxin*, benevolence—then the “great peace” envisaged in the *Gongyang* Commentary would come into being, with freedom and equality, no differentiation between peoples, and no separation of nations from one another. There were, however, ways to combine the ideal of universality with a nationalism in the here-and-now. As noted by Wong Young-tsu, many reformers “looked to the future realization of a universal world of all nations, while advocating a reformed Chinese nation-state in the present. Indeed, universality was the ultimate goal in the reformers’ evolutionary scheme of gradual change and progress. . . . It was perfectly consistent to recognize the reality of warring nations at present and to envision a better world of universal peace in the future.”³⁸

At this point, one question arises: could nationalism and the whole of Western liberal values, conceived in Chinese terms, be two contradictory drives? In the eyes of the early reformists, like Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, Chinese national interest was indissociable from pride in Chinese culture and, by way of consequence, from the social, political, and institutional framework that sustained that culture. The New Text reformists were, therefore, never antidynastic, laying the blame for China’s ills on the distortion of the “genuine” Chinese tradition. However, from the moment one wanted to do away with that traditional framework, one was inevitably taxed with working against Chinese national interest. That was also the inner contradiction inherent in the anti-Manchu opposition: one could be anti-Manchu out of ethnic nationalism, but doing away with the Manchu dynasty inevitably led to the destruction of the traditional institutional and cultural framework altogether, in which case being a liberal meant being “anti-Chinese.” For the institution of the monarchy, the ultimate target of the anti-Manchu revolutionary movement, was as traditionally Chinese as Confucianism itself.

But after the utter failure of reformism in 1898 and the Confucian universalistic efforts of the New Text school subsided, those who wanted change were left with no alternative other than the radicalization of the reformist spirit

into revolutionism and nationalism, conceived in Western terms. As Levenson has it, “nationalism invades the Chinese scene as culturalism hopelessly gives way.”³⁹ China was no longer a world in itself, but a unit in the world. It had become an objective nation whose traditional values could now be objectively criticized and denounced as tyranny.

New Text/Old Text: From Reformism to Revolutionism

After the failure of the reform movement in 1898, we see nationalistic feelings, directed against both the Manchu conservative regime and Western imperialism, gather momentum in growing contradiction to the tenets of traditional culture, represented chiefly by Confucian values. Kang Youwei’s intellectual preeminence among the early Chinese intelligentsia was soon challenged by Zhang Binglin (1869–1935), a young scholar who opposed not only Kang’s political cause of reformism but also his New Text interpretation of Confucianism. Zhang was nurtured in the spirit inherited from the Ming loyalists, with a heightened awareness of anti-Manchuism as an ethnically oriented nationalism: the uniqueness of the Chinese people lay in their pure blood and sacred land, and the existence of the Manchu regime represented the domination of the Han Chinese by an ethnic minority. Thus, it was with its utter failure that reformism radicalized into a nationalistic attack against the Manchus both as an ethnic minority and as an oppressive regime.

It was largely by reference to the *guwen/jinwen* controversy that Zhang Binglin opposed Kang Youwei’s ideas. In 1899, Zhang wrote an article entitled *Jin gu wen bianyi* (On the distinction between the New Text and the Old Text teachings)⁴⁰ to refute Liao Ping’s (1852–1932) writings on the New Text school, but it may also be seen as an indirect attack on Kang Youwei.⁴¹ In the course of the same year, in the reformist journal *Qingyi bao* (Journal of remonstrance), Zhang published a major article entitled *Rushu zhenlun* (Truthful disquisition on Confucianism), attacking the views of Kang Youwei and Tan Sitong.

One century after Zhang Xuecheng, Zhang Binglin was taking up the banner of the Old Text view that the Classics were history and not fiction or prophecy, against Liao Ping who said that “the Classics are all abstract words and not real history.” Liao Ping considered the Classics so far from history that he treated the *Chunqiu* not at all as it appeared, a chronicle of the ancient state of Lu, but as a vision of the modern world, with Zheng standing for China, Qin for England, Lu for Japan, and Duke Ai of Lu for the Emperor Meiji. Opposing this view, Zhang Binglin deplored the New Text invocation of Han apocrypha, the esoteric *weishu*, as keys to the Classics’ alleged character of prophetic revelation. He scouted the New Text claim that Confucius composed (not transmitted) the original Classics, and claimed that even the *Chunqiu*, the one classic which all Confucianists had always ascribed to Confucius himself, was not constructed by Confucius *de novo* but based on the records of Zuo Qiuming, the historian of Lu.

It may appear paradoxical, given his revolutionary stance, that Zhang should be here seen attempting to salvage the Chinese scriptural tradition from the erosion introduced by the late Qing New Text which had turned the Classics into empty bags that could be filled with any contents whatsoever. In actual fact, what Zhang was trying to rescue was not so much the original sense of canonicity of the Confucian Classics as their textual and historical authenticity, thereby contributing to de-sacralizing them.

Zhang, in his opposition to his New Text elders, was led to reassess the image of Confucius through the figure of Liu Xin, whom he considered to be the greatest scholar in the whole Chinese scriptural tradition. Some of the most virulent criticisms of the sacred figure of Confucius are to be found in Zhang's writings. In a revised edition of the *Qiushu* (Book of railery), which he wrote in 1900, Zhang already cast Confucius in an unflattering light. His criticisms were continued in the later editions of his book, and also in an important essay written in 1906, *Zhuzi xue lüeshuo* (A general discussion of the noncanonical philosophies), in which he painted Confucius as a self-serving and unprincipled scholar. Confucianism was also sometimes depicted as a creed that encouraged muddled thinking and promoted a morality that placed a premium on self-seeking and hypocritical behavior—see his *Bo Kongjiao yi* (Refutation of the Confucian religion). This sort of unreserved attack on Confucius and Confucianism, which anticipated the iconoclasm of the May Fourth generation, is proof that Western values were now possessing the younger minds, and the harder they found it to cram their new knowledge into Kang's Confucianism, the less they cared about any Confucius, be he New Text or Old Text.

For those who thought that the only way out for China was to destroy its own tradition altogether, it was indeed convenient to point out that the whole of a two-thousand-year-old tradition was originally founded on a vitiated scriptural basis: if the books in which one had believed for more than two millennia were forgeries (by a known faker, Liu Xin), then the whole tradition itself was a forgery which could be done away with without any remorse. On the other hand, through the “rehabilitation” of Liu Xin, it was the sacred figure of Confucius himself which came under scrutiny and was being reassessed. While New Text reformism had opened the way to bringing into doubt the entire scriptural tradition, Old Text iconoclasm was destroying the traditional monarchic world order built about the image of Confucius.

Another radical figure of the post-1895 period, when the cultural impact of the West was beginning to spread beyond the coastal treaty ports into the inland cities on a large scale, was Liu Shipei (1884–1919). Like Zhang Binglin, with whom he had an opportunity to collaborate on the revolutionary *Minbao* (The people's journal) during his stay in Japan in 1907–8, Liu was both heavily influenced by his family's anti-Manchu feeling and ethnic consciousness and in opposition to Kang Youwei's New Text positions via Liao Ping.⁴² Liu's first published book, the *Rangshu* (Book of expulsion), shows some points of conver-

gence with Zhang Binglin's strain of ethnic nationalism, being obviously inspired by Wang Fuzhi's *Huangshu* (Yellow book). Significantly enough, the exposition of Liu's nationalism is closely associated in the book with a revolt against the traditional Confucian moral doctrine of the three bonds (*san gang*)—namely, that the central institutions of the Chinese sociopolitical order, kingship and the family, are imbedded in the sacred cosmos and constitute the core of a universal order on earth that revolves around China as its center. For Chang Hao, "it is clear that Liu's sociopolitical protest goes much deeper than a mere revolt against the Manchu regime in Peking. It challenges the legitimacy of the whole traditional sociopolitical order."⁴³

The polemic tone of the *Rangshu* is symptomatic of a deep intellectual crisis which Liu, in an eminently Chinese way, expresses in moral and cultural terms by going back to the font of his intellectual training, the Han Learning inherited from Dai Zhen. In a book he co-authored in 1903, which is generally considered as completing the *Rangshu*, the *Zhongguo minyue jingyi* (The essential meaning of Chinese doctrines of social contract), Liu develops his conception of the "collective interest" (*gong*) on the basis of Rousseau's political thought. Liu is thus led "to develop a new understanding of Confucian populism and, by the same token, to criticize Confucian political thought. . . . Liu's principal target is the authoritarian, hierarchical pattern of the sociopolitical order as epitomized by the institution of kingship."⁴⁴

It was during his two-year stay in Japan that Liu's thought underwent such radicalization as to lead him to embrace a form of anarcho-communism which he ardently professed in the *Tianyi* (Natural principles), which he co-edited with his wife. In these articles, Liu expounded his vision of an ideal society from which all traces of inequality would have disappeared. Such an utopian vision, which Liu sometimes referred to as the "great unity" (*datong*), is of course strongly reminiscent of Kang Youwei's, with significant differences in actual content. As noted by Chang Hao, "Kang Youwei envisaged the age of grand unity as the culmination of an inevitable process of history, but Liu looks on his ideal society as a creation of deliberate human action—a social revolution. . . . Kang saw history as an inexorable march through determinate stages of a long process toward a predetermined end; Liu's fervent espousal of anarchism implied a view of history as a cataclysmic leap to a radically new future through revolutionary action."⁴⁵

Conclusion

The revival of the *jinwen/guwen* controversy in the late Qing was symptomatic of the total reassessment by the Chinese intellectuals of the early modern age of the whole cultural tradition. Confucianism seems to have reached its ultimate stage of elasticity and capacity for absorption with the failure of the New Text revival. Confucianism had to acknowledge that it could neither exclude nor

absorb Western ideas. From 1800 to 1900, new forms of political discourse appeared in the field of state ideology. Social and economic pressures, coupled with population growth, placed demands on Qing China that rulers and officials had never before faced. Moreover, in 1800 Qing China was on the eve of a confrontation with Western imperialism and a rising Japan that would unleash revolutionary forces at all levels of Chinese society.

Appeals to alternative forms of Confucianism to revamp the imperial system turned out to be largely and definitely ineffective. The New Texters' reformist criticisms of state despotism initially seemed to offer no alternatives to the Confucian imperial political system or to the elitism of gentry society. Reemergence of New Text Confucianism, the first of all imperial Confucianisms, coincided with the end of imperial China. The spirit of the 1898 reforms may be considered the ultimate attempt by Chinese intellectuals to reassess and recycle the traditional heritage. But in so doing, they unwittingly blew it to pieces, leaving the borrowing of Western ideas as the only alternative.

As one proceeds into the nineteenth century, new intellectual influences appeared, generated out of the growing impact of the West on China during the second half of the Qing. At first this impact was largely confined to the proselytizing activities of Christian missionaries, but during the nineteenth century it expanded to include many closely interrelated military, political, and economic pressures. As a consequence, the need began to be felt to rediscover within Chinese culture some primitive traces of ideas which were then being brought over from the West. Western sciences and religion brought in ideas and views which inevitably undermined the whole traditional hierarchical order with its cosmological symbolism. Utilitarian notions such as wealth and power gradually replaced Confucianism as the state's *raison d'être*.

Modern nationalism turned out to be incompatible with even a very flexible version of Confucianism, as New Text proved amenable to radical reforms in the late nineteenth century, but its traditional mystical approach to imperial authority did not allow for the emergence of the notion of citizenship. It was not until he utterly rejected the whole Confucian tradition that Liang Qichao was able to construct his theory of the citizen. Meanwhile, thinkers like Zhang Binglin and Liu Shipei had revived Old Text historicism in opposition to New Text mysticism as it was represented by Kang Youwei, finishing off the work of de-sacralizing the authority of the Classics and depriving the imperial institution of its main source of legitimacy. The eclipse of classical studies, what Mark Elvin has called the "collapse of scriptural Confucianism," which had legitimated imperial rule and the gentry monopoly on civil service examination success, was inevitable with the abolition of the examination system in 1905, which in turn was one of the proximate causes of the fall of the dynasty. In many ways, the acknowledgment or not of the enduring validity of scriptural tradition proved to be the watershed between reformism and revolutionism.

Notes

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Peter Zarrow for adducing many useful remarks and changes to this article, and for leading me to think much further about a number of important issues. My thanks also go to Professor Pierre-Etienne Will (Collège de France, Paris) and Professor Marianne Bastid-Bruguière (C.N.R.S., Paris) for taking the pains to read my work and letting me partake of their expertise on Qing history. I remain, however, entirely responsible for all errors and misinterpretations. Note that all the transcriptions appearing in quotations have been converted into pinyin.

1. Jerome Grieder, *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China: A Narrative History* (New York: Free Press, and London: McMillan, 1981), p. 52.
2. Chang Hao, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis: Search for order and meaning, 1890–1911* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 10.
3. Benjamin A. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 23. See also his *Classicism, Politics and Kinship: The Ch'ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press) 1990, p. xxiii.
4. Chang Hao, op. cit., p. 182.
5. On this subject, see Michael Nylan, "The Chin-wen/Ku-wen Controversy in Han Times," *T'oung Pao* LXXX, 1–3 (1994), pp. 82–144.
6. On He Xiu and the New Text tradition in Eastern Han, see my *Etude sur le Confucianisme Han: l'élaboration d'une tradition exégétique sur les Classiques*, Paris, Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1985.
7. It should be remembered that the Gongyang Commentary, accompanied by He Xiu's subcommentary (*jiegu*), were the only *jinwen* texts in the whole corpus of the Thirteen Classics selected under the Tang. On the textual history of the *Chunqiu* and its main classical commentaries, see my article "Ch'un ch'i, Kung yang, Ku liang and Tso chuan," in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, Michael Loewe, ed., The Society for the Study of Early China & The Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1993, pp. 67–76.
8. Elman, *Classicism, Politics and Kinship*, p. 146.
9. "The Six Classics are all histories" were the very first words of Zhang Xuecheng's *Wenshi tongyi* (General principles of literature and history).
10. Elman, *Classicism, Politics and Kinship*, p. 273.
11. See his *Zuoshi Chunqiu kaozheng*, first published in 1805, included in *Huang Qingjingjie, juan 1294–95*.
12. Cf. Thomas A. Metzger, *Escape from Predicament: Neo-Confucianism and China's Evolving Political Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 187.
13. See, on this subject, Lin Congshun, *Xi Han qianqi sixiang yu fajia de guanxi* (Taipei, Da'an chubanshe, 1991). On "knowing how to weigh circumstances" (*zhi quan*), see my *Etude sur le confucianisme Han*, pp. 183 f., and my article "Le statut des lettrés sous les Han," in *Tradition et innovation en chine et au Japon. Regards sur l'histoire intellectuelle*, Charles Le Blanc and Alain Rocher, eds., Montréal, Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1996, pp. 69–92; see also Jerome Grieder, op. cit., p. 115.
14. Elman, *Classicism, Politics and Kinship*, p. 276. Thomas A. Metzger, in *Escape from Predicament*, p. 179, has described the Qing concept of authority as a "triangular pattern": "the sovereign authority of the *jun* (ruler) was balanced by the *junzi*'s (true gentleman's) role as the potentially ultimate vehicle of moral insight, and the authority of the classics overarched both these roles."
15. Chang Hao, op. cit. p. 5.

16. It is interesting to note that some contemporaries of Kang still thought of the necessity for reform in cyclical terms. For instance, Xue Fucheng (1838–1894), one of Li Hongzhang's advisers and a member of the Chinese diplomatic mission to London between 1890 and 1894, argued in 1879 that just as there had been a great change of institutions (*bianfa*) at the time when the ancient Qin dynasty was founded, another great change was due two thousand years later, particularly since China had entered into a new international system. See his “Preliminary proposals concerning Western affairs” (*Chouyang chuyi*) in *Xue Fucheng quanji*, 3 vols. (Taipei: Guangwen, 1963), vol. 2. It was the same Xue Fucheng who, in his “Collection of essays written overseas” (*Haiwai wenbian*), described the advent of Western technology as “a most wonderful phenomenon in the universe.” The same idea was voiced by Yan Fu who said that China was experiencing the greatest change since the Qin period, the reasons for which he ascribed to *yunhui*, the mystically predestined change derived from Neo-Confucian cosmology, see *Yan Jidao shiwen chao* (Poems and essays by Yan Fu), Shanghai, Guohua, 1922, 1/1.

17. On Kang Youwei, see Hsiao Kung-ch'üan, “K'ang Yu-wei and Confucianism,” *Monumenta Serica* 18 (1959), pp. 96–212; and *A Modern China and a New World: K'ang Yu-wei, Reformer and Utopian, 1858–1927* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975.) In his *Datong shu* (Book of the Great Harmony), which was not completed until 1902, Kang developed the Gongyang theory of the Three Ages (*san shi*) as three distinct eras within the period covered by the *Chunqiu* according to Confucius' proximity in time to the events he was recording. According to this theory, the history of Lu comprised three stages, evolving from the distant past, which Confucius had only heard about indirectly from tradition, through the period of the recent past, which he had heard about, to the present age, which he had witnessed with his own eyes. This periodization was later developed by the Later Han New Text representative He Xiu, who saw in these three periods three stages of social development: “decay and chaos” (*shuailuan*), “rising peace” (*shengping*), and “universal peace” (*taiping*). See my *Etude sur le confucianisme Han*, pp. 207–240.

18. Published in Guangzhou in 1891 and banned by imperial decree in 1894, and again in 1898 and 1900.

19. Cf. *Xinxue weijing kao*, repr. Beijing, Zhonghua shuju 1956, pp. 2f. Translation of this passage in Mark Elvin, “The collapse of scriptural Confucianism,” *Papers on Far Eastern History*, Canberra, 41 (March 1990), pp. 45–77.

20. Written in 1896, but not published until the end of 1897 in Shanghai, banned for political reasons in 1898 and again in 1900. Repr. Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1958.

21. Translation of this passage in Mark Elvin, “The Collapse of Scriptural Confucianism,” p. 54.

22. Kang here has in mind a legend contained in one of the Han apocrypha, according to which Confucius was conceived as the result of a meeting between his mother and a “Black Emperor” in a dream.

23. Translation for this passage in Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, transl. Derk Bodde, vol. II (Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 675.

24. See, e.g., Liang Qichao, *Nanhai Kang xiansheng zhuan* in *Yinbingshi wenji* (Collected writings from the Ice-drinker's Studio), Shanghai, 1926, 39/67a; and Tan Sitong, *Renxue* (published in 1898, some months after Tan's martyr death) in *Tan Sitong quanji* (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1954), p. 55.

25. See Liang's *Qingdai xueshu gailun* 26, in Zhu Weizheng, ed., *Liang Qichao lun Qing xueshi er zhong* (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 1985), p. 70.

26. Mark Elvin, “The Collapse of Scriptural Confucianism,” pp. 64, 72.

27. *Gu shi bian*, vol. 1, 1926, repr. Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982, p. 43. Translation of this passage in Arthur W. Hummel, *The Autobiography of a Chinese Historian* (Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1931), p. 78.

28. Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate, vol. I: The Problem of Intellectual Continuity* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), p. 99.
29. Elman, *Classicism, Politics and Kinship*, p. 236.
30. See *Analects XV*, 22: *Junzi qun er bu dang* “Gentlemen are sociable but do not form parties.”
31. Chang Hao, op. cit. p. 6.
32. Elman, *Classicism, Politics and Kinship*, p. 302. Cf. *Chan-xing xueji* (Notes on studies at Changxing), Guangzhou, 1891, pp. 9a-b.
33. *Mengzi wei* (Esoteric meanings of the Mencius), Shanghai, 1916, 1/6b.
34. Chang Hao, op. cit. p. 65.
35. See Liang's Preface to *Chunqiu zhongguo yidi bian* (The Spring and Autumn Annals' distinction between the Chinese and the Barbarians), in *Yinbingshi wenji*, 3/49b.
36. Chang Hao, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 45.
37. Preface to *Shuoqun* in *Yinbingshi wenji*, 3/45b.
38. Wong Young-tsu, “The Ideal of Universality,” in Paul A. Cohen and John E. Schrecker, eds., *Reform in 19th Century China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 150.
39. Levenson, op. cit., p. 104.
40. Reprinted in Tang Zhijun, ed., *Zhang Taiyan zhenglun xuanji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), pp. 108–115. See also Zhang's *Guoxue gailun* (Overview of our nation's learning) (Taipei: He Luo tushu chubanshe, 1974), pp. 27–38, 44–46. On Zhang, cf. Charlotte Furth, “The Sage as Rebel: The Inner World of Chang Ping-lin,” in *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976).
41. Liao Ping's scholarly career faithfully reflects the evolution and devolution of New Text studies in the ultimate part of the Qing dynasty. One should be reminded that Kang Youwei's *Xinxue weijing kao* of 1891 and *Kongzi gaizhi kao* of 1897 were largely inspired by Liao Ping's *Pi Liu pian* (Treatise refuting Liu Xin) and *Zhi sheng pian* (Treatise on knowing the sage). Together, these treatises made up Liao's manuscript of 1886, the *Jin gu xue kao* (On the Modern text and Ancient text learning).
42. Liu Shipei, “Zhi Liao Jiping lun tianren shu” (Letter to Liao Ping on Heaven and Man), *Zhongguo xuebao* 2 (Feb. 1916), p. 1a. See ibid., Liao Ping's reply, “Fu Liu Shenshu shu.”
43. Chang Hao, op. cit. p. 150.
44. Chang Hao, op. cit., p. 165.
45. Chang Hao, op. cit., pp. 179, 190.

The People, People's Rights, and Rebellion: The Development of Tan Sitong's Political Thought

Ingo Schäfer

*The sword's blade across my neck,
I look toward heaven—laughing.*

*—Words on the wall of a prison cell,
believed to have been written by Tan Sitong*

Tan Sitong (1854–1898) has generally been regarded as a radical exponent of the reform movement of 1898. It was only, however, in the last years of his life that he advocated ideas concerning the people, people's rights, and people's knowledge, equality of all men, individual self-determination, legal equality of nations, and the final dissolution of national boundaries. Early writings bear witness to a conservative *Weltanschauung* which essentially clung to traditional Chinese cultural values. Although Tan's early texts can hardly be regarded as original, they must be taken into consideration to understand the political and intellectual development of Tan's thought and also the depth of discontinuity in his thought, which can be explained by the drama of the historical process itself.

I shall examine one aspect of Tan's thought that was a principal constituent of his political thinking: the concept of the people (*min*). Tan regarded the relationship between the "people" and the "ruler" (*jun*) as an opposition developing into an antagonism through the course of history. In using concepts such as "people's power" (*minquan*), "people's rule" (*minzhu*), "self-determination" (*zizhu*), and "equality" (*pingdeng*), Tan cited the idea of democracy in the tradition of the

French Revolution, but in his elaboration of these concepts he was concerned with the autochthonous political and philosophical traditions. One topic in this essay will be to explore the specific relationships among these concepts. In this connection the functional application of the notion of the "people" in Tan's strategy of alliances will be examined.

To elucidate the tension between Tan's late ideas and his early political projects concerning the relations of power, I begin with a short analysis of Tan's early text "Zhi yan," in which the contradictions Tan later described were still concealed under the veil of the idea of a simply structured Chinese society. In this image of harmony, the "people" were not yet registered as standing in opposition to the "ruler." Analogous to this image of a homogeneous social community, Tan constructed the process of history as a cycle that ran through different periods but closed in on itself.

The Spheres of Civilization and Barbarity

In Tan's first political text, "Zhi yan" (Views on the management of world affairs), which dates to the year 1884, we find instead of the people-ruler dichotomy, which constituted a central complex of problems in Tan's later writings, especially in his major work *Ren xue* (Exposition of Benevolence), the construct of a Chinese sphere as hegemonic center of the world. This sphere is conceived as a social totality, the historical process of which was not caused by internal factors but by the cosmically determined succession of ethical and cultural principles.

In the "Zhi yan" Tan divided the world into three hierarchically structured geographical-civilizational regions (*san qu*). The "countries of the Chinese sphere" (*Huaxia zhi guo*) included China, Korea, Vietnam, and Burma and formed the region of intrinsic civilization. This sphere was in possession of the superior ethical norms of the "three bonds and five constant relationships" (*san'gang wuchang*), exactly those norms in the Confucian state ethic Tan later attacked severely in the *Ren xue* and held responsible for the stagnation evident in contemporary Chinese society.

The first sphere developed through different historical phases, each step being dominated by one of the ethico-cultural principles of "sincerity" (*zhong*), "plainness" (*zhi*), and "refinement" (*wen*), which succeeded one another.¹ Tan adopted this conception from categories of periodization which can be found in the *Chunqiu fanlu* (The Spring and Autumn Annals' radiant dew) and the *Baihu tongyi* (Comprehensive discussions at the White Tiger Hall), works of the New Text School of the Han dynasty which influenced Tan's view of history.² The period from the Qin dynasty to the present showed a stagnation in the development of Chinese civilization caused by the exclusive domination of "refinement," while the quality of "plainness" was already totally lost.³ This domination of "refinement" made China vulnerable to the powers of the second sphere.

The “barbarian countries” (*yidi zhi guo*)—in Tan’s perspective, the neighboring countries of China, the European nations, and the United States—were inferior to the first sphere in the realm of ethical norms and the achievements of civilization, but they were technologically developed and, owing to their economic and military strengths, were capable of breaking into the first sphere. The third sphere consisted of “countries of the beasts” (*qinshou zhi guo*) and was unable to compete with the other two spheres. The peoples of these “southern regions” (Africa, South America, Australia, and the South Pole) were already under the control of the “barbarian countries” and had to suffer the fate of slavery.⁴

The division of the world that appears to be imaginary and only motivated by Tan’s Sinocentrism contained a realistic feature. The colonization of the Southern Hemisphere by the imperialist states demonstrated a possible prospect for China, as Tan perceived it. The designation “countries of the beasts” may be interpreted—apart from Tan’s culturalistic haughtiness—as the product of a defensive reaction, a projection of the anxiety over becoming also a victim of subjugation by the “barbarians.” This speculation may be verified by Tan’s later texts, especially the *Ren xue*, in which he explicitly stated his fears: “After two thousand years, we have fallen from the culture of the Three Dynasties to that of the barbarians of today. In another two thousand years’ time, we will degenerate from the barbarian culture to that of apes, orangutans, dogs, pigs, frogs, and clams.”⁵ The shift in Tan’s point of view regarding the status of Chinese society occurred in his writings after 1895 (see below).

Not only the Chinese but also the barbarian sphere passed through a historical cycle whose stages were characterized by the three successive principles mentioned above, though the cycles of the two spheres did not proceed simultaneously. Tan Sitong held that the barbarian countries had just reached the state of “plainness,” as their history was much shorter than that of China. China was not able to overcome the vitality of the barbarians at the present time, interestingly dubbed the “epoch of the market” (*shidao zhi shi*), which was characterized by the aggressive appearance of barbarian might in China.⁶

We now confront the penetration of a new complex of problems in the “*Zhi yan*” which on the whole was an explanation of traditional Han Sinocentric cultural values.⁷ Tan began to ask questions about the unity of the “Chinese sphere.” Doubts come to light as to whether the acute threat to China can really be understood as negligible. Tan pointed out that the “barbarian countries” were capable of resolute action. He explained this ability by their exemplary unity:

But when [their ruler] issues an order the whole nation obeys as if it were a divine order. When a law is enacted the whole nation follows it as if it were a plumb-line. . . . Name (*ming*) and reality (*shi*) correspond as form and shadow. . . . Their *dao* may not be the *dao* of the old, yet they are of one [mind]. Their customs (*feng*) may not be [the customs of the old] but they are one. This is the

effect of their *zhong* and *zhi* whereby they have risen and established themselves firmly. These facts should suffice to wake us up.⁸

Tan's descriptions of the unity of the barbarian nations implied a recognition of the disintegration of the "Chinese sphere"—and this was precisely the problem that Tan's later texts take up. The certainty of the historical cycle, however, as well as the ultimate superiority of Chinese civilization, helped him to bridge this abyss in the end. Tan made clear that the principles of the barbarian countries were only superficially equal to Chinese ethico-cultural principles. In reality, they did not contain the special qualities of the Chinese ones.⁹

In the "Zhi yan" the barbarians are not to be understood as a symbol for a new social order, which was still vague in its structure and therefore could not be adequately described. In elucidating the relationship between "Chinese civilization" and the "barbarian countries," Tan seemed to have a presentiment of changes to come, but the traits of the new, represented by barbarian achievements and values, were still fixed in the ideological framework of traditional Han cultural values. The barbarians were provided with capabilities and virtues, such as consideration of mutual benefit, avoidance of emotional extremes, love of learning, frugality and a sense of utility, industrial talent, and creative genius combined with the ability to cast away obsolete etiquette.¹⁰ Many of these qualities reappear in the *Ren xue* as virtues of a new social order: daily renovation, striving for what is new, appreciation of time, and efforts toward simplification. But in the interpretation given in the "Zhi yan," these capacities originated in the final analysis from Chinese civilization itself, and Tan was convinced that the "barbarian convictions are derived from Mozi."¹¹

In addition, the "barbarian countries" were moving toward "refinement," but they would not be able, as China was, to exist without the quality of "plainness" and therefore they would have to face disintegration and decline in the future: "The strength [of the barbarians] is not enough to make us helpless. The zeal and violent rise of [the barbarians] are not enough to make us perish. Their craftiness and ruthlessness are not enough to deceive us."¹² Tan told his readers that there was no need to understand the barbarians. If only the residents of the Chinese sphere would be willing to realize the cosmic law by means of moral accomplishment, the succession of the three principles would guarantee a return to the beginning. China would remain the hegemonic center of the world, and the confrontation of the first and second spheres would be brought to an end.

The certainty of cyclical repetition affirmed the legality of the existing order which, as a closed totality, only reproduced itself. Seen from the perspective of Tan's ideas from 1895 onward, the specific discursive structure of the "Zhi yan" consisted in its considering the fissures and contradictions of Chinese society which Tan noticed in his later texts only as passing deviations. Although he described in the "Zhi yan" the disturbing effect of external influences in a situa-

tion in which the Chinese cycle had entered into a particular phase of weakness, he did not believe that the coherency of the system was really endangered.

I have drawn attention to the discontinuities in Tan's thought, but this is not to say that there was an absolute break (which possibly can never be effected). In a way Tan transformed his conception of an undivided social unity into the idea of a "Great Unity" tied together through boundless communication—the social utopia depicted in the *Ren xue*.¹³

A Disintegrated World and the Western Utopia

Although Tan pointed in his early writings to the penetration of the world by Western imperialist powers and became aware of the threat to the Chinese sphere from outside, he still saw this historical process from the position of the putative superiority of Chinese civilization which was governed by imaginary cosmic principles. His view on this score did not change until he was confronted by the disastrous outcome of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95.¹⁴

From 1895 onward Tan also began to recognize antagonisms in China's political and social situation as in relations between China and the "nations of the West." Above all, though, he described the antagonism between Manchu and Han as an internal conflict of Chinese society. I think this perception of internal social conflict—namely, the experience that "Sinic" unity was falling apart into opposites—can be described as a turning point in Tan's *Weltanschauung*. The fundamental question Tan asked from this point forward was: Is it possible to overcome difference, or non-identity, to build unity again?

In contrast to such reformers as Kang Youwei (1858–1927) and Liang Qichao (1873–1929), Tan did not believe that the conflict between Manchu and Han was soluble. On the contrary, it had to be fought out as a matter of life and death. Tan's anti-Manchuism, which later exerted an influence on such nationalist revolutionaries as Chen Tianhua (1875–1905) and Zou Rong (1885–1905), did contain biological features, but Tan's analysis of the "race conflict" was directly connected with his criticism of Chinese despotism.

On the political level, Tan spoke now of a polarity between "monarchic rights" (*junquan*) and "people's rights" (*minquan*). He pointed out that despotic rule in China had led to a technologically backward civilization and society, the isolation of which was now being forced opened. In consequence, the Chinese nation was being exposed to increasing economic, political, and military pressures from the foreign powers, and thus China had ceased to be the center of a hegemonic sphere claiming civilizing rule. It had now become part of world society.

Tan took an ambivalent standpoint regarding the political inclinations of the imperialist states. Especially in his letters of the years 1895–96, he still accentuated the aggressive sides of societies that "by means of trade wage war and in this way are able to extinguish other nations."¹⁵ This idea may be regarded as a

continuation of the conception of the “epoch of the market” which can be found in the “Zhi yan.” The danger to China was obvious. If no radical political change took place, “the 400 million of the yellow race will become slaves of the white race like the Ainu of Japan, the red-skinned aborigines of America, and the blacks of India and Africa.”¹⁶ In the language of the “Zhi yan,” the peril existed that China might be degraded to the status of a country of the third sphere, while the Western nations would occupy the hegemonic position that Chinese civilization had heretofore held.

Standing in contrast to his evaluation of the aggressive external orientation of the “Western nations” were Tan’s views on the political and social organization of these states, which he thought would be desirable for China. The “Siwei yiyun tai duanshu xu” (A Short Discourse from the Siwei Yiyun Studio), a letter written in 1895, was the first text in which Tan drew a utopian picture of Western society in contrast to Chinese despotism. The “complete Westernization” Tan called for sharply conflicted with the dominant political ideology of the Confucian state and the social and political practices it sanctioned. Tan was convinced at this point that the political and social order of the “Western nations” would by and large be able to realize the promise of the “Great Unity,” the fundamental ideal of the *tianxia* project. In this sense, the center of the ecumenicity had, in Tan’s eyes, already shifted to the West. In the *Ren xue*, Tan even justified military interference by the imperialistic states as morally motivated punitive measures. In this manner Tan tried to veil the contradiction between democracy and the intolerable aggression of the “virtuous” societies.

In the “Siwei yiyun tai duanshu xu,” Tan regarded “people’s rule” (*minzhu*) founded on “people’s rights” as the dominant form of political rule in advanced Western societies, and he defined unhindered communication (*tong*) within society as the characteristic feature of “people’s rule.” According to Tan, in the “Western nations” the principle of equality took effect in the relations between ruler and people as well as in such relations as between men and women, children and parents, and the like.¹⁷ Only in a letter written to Tang Caichang (1867–1900) of 1896 did he first notice the problem of the accumulation of riches in the hands of a few and the pauperization of many. Tan located there the reason for the emergence of parties in the West calling for egalitarianism, and Tan thought that the gap between rich and poor should be avoided in China.¹⁸

The concepts of “people’s rights,” “people’s rule,” and “equality” that Tan utilized originated in the Western tradition. However, the reception of Western ideas—ranging from the philosophy of the enlightenment and liberalism to the theories of evolution and social Darwinism, to ludicrous but nonetheless influential texts such as Henry Wood’s “Ideal Suggestion through Mental Photography”—remained diffuse and fragmentary. Tan was scarcely informed about the historical and social context in which these ideas had arisen. He identified political ideas from the West with existing political systems which he regarded as the direct cause of the ideas (for instance, he connected the idea of “people’s rule”

with the French Revolution *and* the existing government in France). Thus, in the process of their importation, these concepts underwent a substantive shift of meaning. The reception of the political theories and the perception of revolutionary or reformatory processes in Western countries and Japan were structured around the motive of constructing instruments of analysis and change for Chinese society.

Western concepts like democracy, popular sovereignty, and equality were semantically superimposed through reference to native traditions of Chinese political thinking. Thus, Western concepts acquired connotations that originated in the store of traditional Chinese political and philosophical theories. In addition, though, native intellectual traditions acquired new interpretations in the light of foreign ideas. In this way Tan connected the idea of “people’s rights” to the principle of equality with reference to Mencius, Mozi, Zhang Zai, Huang Zongxi, and others.¹⁹ Equality of men and—as Tan emphasized—women was thus rooted in the cosmic order. In his Chinese variant of natural right, Tan directly criticized China’s political institutions and social structures. Although Tan never read Rousseau’s *Social Contract*, there was an “unwitting coincidence” in their views, as Liang Qichao put it.²⁰ In combating the traditional *tianxia* ideology, Tan made plain that he thought the principles of “people’s rights,” equality, and the like were valid not only in the West but also in China.

“People’s Rights” and “People’s Rule”

The idea of “people’s rights” and related concepts like “people’s rule” and “monarchic rights” (with respect to “monarchic rule” or *junzhu*) played a role in the discussions of the predecessors to the reformers of 1898. As a rule these early supporters of reforming China’s political system were connected with the *yangwu* (“Western affairs,” or early Westernization) movement, led by a group of scholar-officials who promoted the importation of Western scientific knowledge to initiate a technological modernization. Reformers such as Zheng Guanying (1842–1922), Wang Tao (1828–1897), and Xue Fucheng (1838–1894) pleaded for a balancing of “people’s rights” and “monarchic rights” by a “joint rule of monarch and populace” (*jun min gongzhu*). Prerequisite to such a “joint rule” was the principle of “mediation” or “communication”²¹ (as noted above, “communication” or *tong* was also an important concept in Tan’s *Ren xue*). The difference was that the early reformers, though aiming at a legal regulation concerning the rights and obligations of the various social actors, wanted to safeguard the structural division of society into top and bottom, while Tan’s concept of *tong* was directed at the political elimination of that difference. Under despotic rule there was no “communication” between ruler and ruled, they argued, for only under well-balanced forms of rule would there be a constant connection between the poles of the “monarch” and the “people.”

A general consensus of the early reform generation was the rejection of “ex-

treme positions," with despotism on one end of the spectrum and "people's rule" (with too much emphasis laid on "people's rights") on the other (Zheng Guanying).²² Thus, the early reformers looked critically upon the contemporary forms of popular rule in France and North America. As the reformers saw it, republican "people's rule" in these countries was rule by the masses, the plebeian mob. "The system of people's rule is the source of rebellion against the authorities and of chaos," as Chen Zhi put it. Therefore, the "uncivilized and lowly people"²³ were always suspect. The early reformers favored a constitutional monarchy along the lines of the German Constitution of the Reich from 1871 over the parliamentary monarchy of the British kind. The German system left the final right of decision to the Kaiser, or *Reichskanzler*, and conceded only restricted rights to the representatives of the people.²⁴

In a letter of 1896, also known as the "Beiyou fangxue ji" (An account of a trip to the north in pursuit of knowledge), Tan offered a historical interpretation of the relationship between "people's rights," "people's rule," and "monarchic rights." He traced the loss of "people's rights" in China to the violation of the principle of equality. As Tan explained this process, the rupture was preceded by an epoch witnessing the gradual loss of "people's rights" beginning with the era of the legendary emperors Yao and Shun and ending with a new definition of the monarch's position. Since the monarch had emerged as the "son of heaven," communication between man and the cosmos was interrupted. At that point, Tan claimed, the equality of man before heaven had been lost. "Heaven" now began to serve as an instrument of social control inasmuch as it delegated its "mandate" to the monarch through an isolated dialogue.²⁵ The *Ren xue* continued discussion of the ruler-subject relationship and criticism of traditional moral norms—namely, those of the ethical system of Neo-Confucianism that, according to Tan, aimed at gaining control over the physical and natural realms as well as manipulating the minds of men.

In the "Beiyou fangxue ji," Tan dispensed with a systematic interpretation of the process of history. However, his idea of a historical process leading from people's rule to despotism and back to people's rule appeared in outline form, while the possibility respecting the degree of intensity of "communication" was looked upon as a criterion for the different stages of historical evolution.²⁶ These ideas patterned on the conception in the "Zhi yan" of the coherence of a developmentally structured historical process were continued in the *Ren xue*, Tan's major work written in 1896–97.

Although Tan used the conception of the "joint rule of the monarch and the people" in other texts, he did not make reference to it in the *Ren xue*. In his lecture, "Lun xuezhe budang jiao ren" (Scholars should not be arrogant), given in 1898, Tan regarded both "people's rule" and the "joint rule of the monarch and the people" as achievements of Western civilization which were considered superior to the Chinese polity and society.²⁷ In the *Ren xue*, however, the concept of a constitutional monarchy was also veiled behind his hopes for a "wise

man.” Tan even went so far as to propose that the Western nations should choose a “wise man” for China, if the Chinese were unable to do so themselves.

Both “joint rule” and “people’s rule” were closely connected with the improvement of “people’s rights,” inasmuch as “people’s rule” was the last phase in the evolution of the historical process. In Tan’s philosophy of history, as explained in the *Ren xue*, this phase was identical with the “Age of Universal Peace” (*taiping shi*), when “Great Unity” (*datong*)—namely, the restoration of equality for all men—would be realized.²⁸ There was to be a leveling of social statuses, while the hierarchical order in the family and the traditional code of morals would be eliminated. Freedom in this utopia of the “Great Unity” was defined by Tan as “autonomy” (*zizhu*) and “*laissez-aller*” (*zaiyou*, in the words of the *Zhuangzi*).²⁹ The process of emancipation would penetrate national boundaries until “people’s rule all over the world” would permit global communication.³⁰

Tan’s concepts of freedom and self-determination were not identical with their Western linguistic equivalents. They should not be put on a level with the liberal tradition in the West in which freedom may be defined as creative activity of the “ego” that constitutes itself through its own will (*Fichte*), nor should they be equated with the Hegelian-Marxist definition of freedom as *Einsicht in die Notwendigkeit* (understanding or accepted necessity).

Tan interpreted the principle of freedom in a contradictory manner. Speaking of the “autonomy of the individual” (*zizhi zhi quan*), he seems to have been inspired by his reading of texts written by the Scottish Presbyterian missionary Alexander Williamson, who referred in his religious treatises to the Lutheran notion of autonomy.³¹ The deconstructive effects this notion of autonomy, once transferred to the mundane sphere, have had in the Western history of ideas are well known.³² The explosiveness of the application of this concept was clearly seen by Zhang Zhidong (1837–1909), exponent of the *yangwu* group and governor-general of Hunan and Hubei from 1889. In his *Quanxue pian* (An exhortation to learning), Zhang criticized the secular interpretation of this notion and tried to press it back into the realm of religion by pointing out that the enlarged application of the notion to the political sphere was based on a misunderstanding by the translator.³³

Tan linked his concept of the “autonomy of the individual” with the idea of an unlimited “mind-power” (*xin li*), which he mainly derived from Buddhist thought.³⁴ In Tan’s interpretation the ego constitutes itself as a world of its own and is connected with other egos at the same time, analogous to the Buddhist concept of a cosmos of infinite worlds, as depicted in the *Ren xue*. By linking the concepts of the individual and “mind-power” with the idea of equality, Tan was initiating a shift of content in the ideas of freedom and self-determination. Equality implied the dissolution of what is different. In the human realm this meant that equality emerged from the removal of hierarchies and the cancellation of the boundaries of the ego: “The difference between the ego and the other disappears, and equality emerges” (*biwo wang pingdeng chu*).³⁵ Tan argued that the true aim

of emancipation was to eliminate all boundaries and to "cut through the nets" (*chongjue wangluo*); even the boundaries of ego and non-ego had to be eliminated to effect a total fulfillment of equality.

Tan thus formulated on one side a social utopia of an association of self-determined individuals liberated from heteronomous coercions in a world not separated by national frontiers in isolated regions. Behind this more or less secular utopia, though, was hidden a transmundane idea of salvation. From this point of view, the ego was encompassed by the all-comprehending unity of the void in which the individual creature vanished. Complete equality came about when boundaries of the individual were dissolved and "all the people attained Buddhahood."³⁶

Rebellion and Restoring Order

Closely connected with his new views on politics and history was the philosophical conception that Tan elaborated in the *Ren xue*. Only the fundamental ideas of the *Ren xue* will be mentioned here. In that work, the cosmos was interpreted as an order that expressed itself in the mutual connection (*ren*) and interpenetration of opposites (*tong*).³⁷ Simultaneously, the basic cosmic structure constituted the model of mankind living together. Thus the cosmic order was identical with moral law, the principle of *ren* representing the equality of all creatures and that of *tong* unhindered mutual communication.

By specifying the model of the historical process that he had sketched in his "Beiyou fangxue ji," Tan pointed out that in the course of history the original harmony of the cosmic and social orders had fallen into decay. This decline was caused by the privileges enjoyed by those rulers who were in control of the means of coercion. "Monarchic rights" subsequently superseded "people's rights"; formerly a realm of common good, the world was converted into the exclusive possession of the despot, and the people were turned into objects of his unlimited rule. "Communication" or "interpenetration" was replaced by "blockage" (*se*) and a fragmentation of the totality.³⁸

After the establishment of a ruler, originally elected by the people and seen as *par inter pares*, a power struggle between the ruler and the people evolved in the course of which "people's rights" were continually restricted until extinguished in modern times. This conflict between ruler and populace was represented in the sphere of ideas by two contending ideological lines. The concept of "people's rights" belonged to the tradition of the "true" teaching of Confucianism. It was Mencius who emphasized the primacy of the people as opposed to the ruler. According to Tan, however, Zhuangzi's view that everyone was potentially qualified to be a ruler also belonged to this tradition as well as Mozi's idea of equality as it appeared in his doctrine of "universal love" (*jian'ai*). The concept of "people's rights" was subsequently elaborated through the idea of the natural equality of men embodied in the cosmos as formulated by Zhang Zai (1020-77),

and through the view of man's autonomy by Lu Jiuyuan (1139–92) and Wang Yangming (1472–1528). Eventually the concept of “people's rights” emerged in the reform ideas of Wang Fuzhi (1619–92) and the antidespotism of Huang Zongxi (1610–95) whose successor Tan thought himself to be.

The opposite line accentuated the necessity of an absolute predominance of the monarch and, in Tan's analysis, had been formulated by Xunzi. With Xunzi there also began a fatal tradition of manipulating popular consciousness, with the object of keeping the people in passivity and fatalistic forbearance. For this purpose, Liu Xin (ca. 46 B.C.E.–23 C.E.) had allegedly falsified the content of Confucian texts; here Tan adopted an idea from Kang Youwei.³⁹ The false “names” (*ming*) so produced were used as components of an ethical system propagated by those intellectuals who attached themselves to the despotic order.⁴⁰ At the core of this ethical system, Tan described the “three cardinal guides” (*san gang*)—obedience of the minister to the monarch, obedience of the son to his father, and obedience of the wife to her husband. Directed as they were against the principle of equality, the “three cardinal guides” functioned as ideological legitimization of the hierarchical structures in society. The line of “monarch's rights” was carried on by Han Yu (768–824), who conceded absolute authority to the monarch while the people were expected to keep up material production.⁴¹ Finally, the Neo-Confucianism of Cheng Hao (1032–85), Cheng Yi (1033–1107), and Zhu Xi (1130–1200) was responsible for the perfection of the ideological “net” that held people's minds restricted in modern times.

Tan's construction forced together disparate ideas to one single line of tradition. The particular filling-up of the concept of “people's rights” by integrating the Confucian discourse on the prominent role of the people as the basis of the state served the purpose of working out an ideological conception that was able to influence parts of the intelligentsia not belonging to the circle of the reformers.

The explosiveness of this attempt became apparent in the strong response of the conservatives. The idea that there had been a democratic tradition in Confucianism was intensively attacked by leading conservative intellectuals like Ye Dehui (1864–1927), who together with Wang Xianqian (1842–1917) and Su Yu became opponents of the reformers' “people's rights” ideology in Hunan: “[Mencius's doctrine that] the people should be held in esteem [means that] the monarch should think highly of the people and does not mean that the people should esteem themselves. In no case did [Mencius] advocate people's rights.”⁴²

For Zhang Zhidong as well, the idea of “people's rights” constituted a line of separation. In his reasoning the specific ideological position dividing the modernizers of the *yangwu* group from the reformers was clearly marked. Zhang regarded the “three cardinal guides” as the ethical core of “Chinese learning,” and he argued that the reformers had misunderstood the essence of Western democracy and that the transfer of that misconceived idea to China would cause uproar and chaos:

Nowadays, China is indeed neither impressive nor powerful. Nevertheless, the populace is still content with its daily work, because the laws of the dynasty hold them together. Once the doctrine of people's rights is advocated, foolish people will assuredly be delighted, unruly people will rise up; the laws will not be carried out, and great disorder will rise on all sides. . . . An investigation of the origin of the doctrine of people's rights in foreign countries merely reveals the idea that a state should have a parliament where the people can express their general opinions and communicate their group feelings. It is only desired that the people should be able to explain their feelings; it is not desired that they wield any power. Translators have altered the wording to call it "people's rights," which is a mistake.⁴³

Actually Tan connected his interpretation of "people's rights" with a call to overthrow the tyranny. In an antagonistic society in which the original right of the people to dethrone their ruler was no longer in force, it was justified, Tan argued, to remove the usurper of power by an act of violence. This included the right of tyrannicide, or, as Tan wrote, "everyone is entitled to kill a ruler if the ruler is bad."⁴⁴ Support of tyrannicide set Tan's political thought against the ideas of reformers Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. As will be demonstrated below, Tan's evocation of the people as a power of revolt was accompanied by his fear of the unbridled forces of the masses, just as his call for a fundamental change and the overthrow of the Manchu government was inconsistent with the reformist practice to initiate political change through the Guangxu emperor.

After the failure of the reform movement, nationalist revolutionaries such as Zou Rong and assassins such as Wu Yue (1877–1905) associated themselves with this position of Tan's.⁴⁵ Tan tried to defend his explosive thesis by referring to the model of tyrannicide in the Confucian canon, for instance the *Shujing* (Book of documents).⁴⁶ He certainly knew, however, that Confucian political thinking justified tyrannicide only *post festum*, after the fall of the despot had indicated that the ruler had forfeited the mandate for having abused the power that heaven bestowed upon him. Thus, the legitimization of the "change of mandate" took place after the establishment and consolidation of a new set of power relations. An active right of resistance could not be easily derived from traditional Confucian political theory.

The curtailment of popular sovereignty was to be regarded as a kind of "rebellion" (*panni*). Any form of rule not founded on the agreement of the people was in Tan's view illegitimate. For that reason a despot could not claim the loyalty of his subjects.⁴⁷ But there was a kind of rebellion that was justified: popular resistance against a despot. Unusual for his time was Tan's idea that rebellion should be regarded as a product of antagonistic social circumstances; it was not caused by criminal motives on the part of insurgents or a rebellious individual. Tan advised his readers to analyze the reasons why people revolt.⁴⁸

In addition to referring to the French Revolution, Tan used several examples from Chinese history to justify tyrannicide and rebellion against despotic rule.

The rebellions Tan mentioned fall under two principal categories. There were rebellions led by a rising political elite or from parts of the ruling elite; the classic case Tan referred to was the killing of the last tyrannical rulers of the Xia and Shang dynasties and the subsequent establishment of new dynasties. He sympathized also with the unsuccessful attempt of the aristocrat Yang Xuangan (d. 613) to overthrow Yang Guang (r. 604–18), the last emperor of the Sui dynasty—traditional Confucian historiography also considered Yang Guang a tyrant and the rebellion of Yang Xuangan to be justified. In Tan’s view, Yang Xuangan’s failure laid the foundation for the overthrow of the Sui dynasty and the establishment of the Tang—it prepared the way for the enthronement of a “wise man” (*shengren*).

The second category of legitimate rebellion was revolts of peasants and the lower classes. The rebellion of Chen She (d. 208 B.C.E.), a farm hand whose army had been recruited from state slaves and compulsory laborers, was justified, according to Tan, because it led to the overthrow of the tyrannical Qin dynasty.⁴⁹

A break with the reformist discourse was marked by Tan’s open sympathy for the leaders of the Taiping Rebellion, Hong Xiuquan (1813–64) and Yang Xiuqing (d. 1856). The Taiping movement, which had been able to establish its own regime directly opposed to the Qing dynasty, had only been suppressed three decades earlier and was still fresh in the social consciousness of the times as a sign of the deep crisis facing the ruling dynasty. Tan seems to have been little interested in the social programs of the Taipings, but he did accentuate the legitimacy of the uprising: “Oppressed by the ruler and the officials, people like Hong [Xiuquan] and Yang [Xiuqing] risk danger because of their desperation. Their situation truly deserves our sympathy.”⁵⁰ In his eyes the terroristic conduct of war waged by the government forces was proof of the brutalization of social relations under Qing rule. He strongly disapproved of those representatives of the Han Chinese upper class, such as Zeng Guofan (1811–72) and Li Hongzhang (1823–1901), who had played principal roles in the suppression of the Taipings.⁵¹

In this passage of the *Ren xue*, the discontinuity in the development of Tan’s political thought can be seen clearly. In early essays, such as “Ji Hongshan xingshi” (On the topography of Mount Hong),⁵² written in 1890, and especially in “Haijiao fujun jiazhan” (A family biography of my ancestor Tan Jisheng),⁵³ written in 1894, contemptuous remarks about the Taiping movement and its leader, Hong Xiuquan, can be found, while Tan extolled the deeds of the Xiang army and the role of his ancestor Tan Jisheng, who distinguished himself in suppressing the Taipings as a commanding officer of the Xiang army. The “Zhongyi jiazhan” (Family biographies of my ancestors known for their loyalty and righteousness), written in the winter of 1894, praised other ancestors who had taken part in the expedition against the Taipings as “loyal and dutiful.”⁵⁴ In accordance with this view, his “Shijuying lu bizhi” (Notes from the Shijuying

Studio), completed in the winter of 1894, characterized the uprising of the Hui in Shaanxi and Gansu (1863–73) as a “rebellion” (*panni*) and labeled the insurgents as “bandits” (*zeikou*).⁵⁵ In the “Xining bo Pingman gong jiazuan” (A family biography of Tan Zonglun, Count of Xining), written late in 1894, Tan traced the family tradition of “suppressing bandits” back to the Ming dynasty and not without pride.⁵⁶

Only three years later Tan wrote: “When the political disorder of a country has not reached its worst, there is no way to bring order out of chaos. Hence when we see that a country can no longer be governed, the best course to take is to encourage it to deteriorate in the hope that order can finally be restored.”⁵⁷ How then did Tan define the parameters of justified rebellion? During the writing of the *Ren xue*, anti-Western movements supported by parts of the rural population and fringe groups (vagrants and jobless people) appeared in Sichuan, Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi, Jiangsu, Shandong, and other provinces. Tan, though, was not in the least thinking of this kind of rebellion and disorder. In the *Ren xue*, he pointed out that a possible intervention by the foreign powers could disturb the plans of the reformers.⁵⁸ In his “Xing suanxue yi” (A proposal to promote the learning of mathematics), he saw the hostility toward foreigners coming from the ultra-conservatives, who were calling for trade barriers and China’s isolation from the outside world, accompanied by a xenophobia “from below.” He explicitly lamented the ravages against Christian churches, the physical attacks on foreigners of Western descent, the obstruction of mining in Hunan Province, as well as the destruction of telegraph lines and foreign machines as the actions of “people whose country is doomed” (*wangguo zhi min*).⁵⁹ Those who opposed foreign influence and Western technology were obscurantists as far as Tan was concerned, for he counted on the support of the West and Japan to abolish the economic backwardness and the political faults of China’s despotic society.

Tan classified the actions against foreigners from the West as a form of political support for those conservative forces opposed to reform, and thus he pleaded for the suppression of riots by violent means.⁶⁰ He called Zhou Han, a well-known anti-Western propagandist in Hunan, a “rumor monger and trouble-maker” (*baishi luanmin*).⁶¹ His attitude toward prospective regional protests against industrial undertakings like coal mining and iron making in Hunan can be seen in a remark he penned in a letter to the reformers Liang Qichao and Wang Kangnian: “If you are anxious that ignorant people (*yumin*) will hinder [the undertakings], I shall think about ways and means to bring them to reason and suppress [unrest].”⁶² Here it should be clear that Tan’s ideas, insofar as they related to the adoption of Western institutions, systems of thought, and technology, stood in distinct contrast with the content and goals of the movements of the rural masses and the common people. Interestingly enough, Zhang Zhidong also turned against anti-Western actions, but he regarded them in his *Quan xue pian* as manifestations of the idea of “people’s power.”⁶³

Intellectual as an Avant-garde

Behind Tan's distrust of "the unrest in the hearts of the people" (*minxin zhi bujing*)⁶⁴ was a fear that the forces of the subaltern classes could not be properly channeled, hence a fear that the reform efforts might be undermined by spontaneous uprisings. Tan conceived of the *people*—as they actually lived—as a tool of history (just as Mencius had).⁶⁵ The spontaneous energies of the people needed the leadership of an intellectual avant-garde capable of determining the direction of the movement. Accordingly, Tan wrote of the deliverance of the people by *great men* who lead, as true subjects of the historical process, the people to revolt or act in their place as avengers in the role of "roving swords-men" (*renxia*):

Patriots and men of benevolence will die without regret if they seek to emulate Chen She and Yang Xuangan whose role in history was to clear the way for the sage rulers. If such an opportunity does not arise, the next best alternative would be that of becoming a roving swordsman, who can help to vent people's grievances and promote a spirit of bravery, which is one way of bringing order out of chaos. . . . Confucians looked down on roving swords-men, putting them on a par with bandits. How can they be expected to know that in an age bound by autocracy, roving swordsmen alone can help us to arouse ourselves, and to prevent the people from becoming more and more benighted, weak and degenerate?⁶⁶

The ideal of the "roving swordsman" had already appeared in Tan's earlier writings.⁶⁷ In his preface to the *Ren xue*, Tan saw the "roving swordsman" in the tradition of the Mohist school. He listed two historical examples of "academic resistance": the scholarly cliques banned in the Later Han dynasty for protesting the usurpation of power by eunuchs; and the Yongjia school, a reform group from the southern Song dynasty that propagated resistance against the Jurchen invaders from the north. Both the struggle against eunuchs and against Northern aggressors, as well as the necessity of reforms, can be understood as allusions to the political situation of Tan's time: the urgency of resistance against the dominant position of the ultra-conservatives at court in Beijing.⁶⁸

Another personification of the "roving swordsman," whom Tan mentioned in the *Ren xue*, were the Japanese *rōnin*, or masterless samurai. He may have been thinking of the role Japanese samurai played on the eve of the Meiji Restoration or in the Popular Rights Movement of the early Meiji era: "No country is nearer to China than Japan, a country China could also take as an example to learn from. The success of their self-strengthening reform had a lot to do with these noble and spirited people, who were in the habit of roaming from place to place, carrying swords in hand and courageously rectifying wrongs by killing the culprits."⁶⁹ This anachronistic type of brave and gallant swordsman, who "championed the good, killed tyrants and achieved great deeds for the state," also played

an important role in romances of chivalry like the *Sanxia wuyi* (Three heroes and five gallants), which was popular in the late Qing.⁷⁰ “Men of benevolence” as well as “roving swordsmen” acted in place of the people who were incapable of acting without leadership and had not yet developed an independent mind. “Men of benevolence” or the “swordsmen” themselves acted as forerunners of an enlightened “wise man” or “sage ruler” who, in contrast to the despot, exercises power in the interest of the community. Tan did not dispense with the idea of the “wise man” representing enlightened rulership, even though he strongly accentuated the role of the “swordsman.”

The ideology of the “great man” can be seen as a form of social support. Accordingly, demands for the enhancement of “people’s rights” in Tan’s scenario may be interpreted as an attempt to strengthen the influence of the reform-oriented stratum of the gentry in the political arena. The reform-oriented gentry was to act in substitution for the still unenlightened majority of the people. Like Liang Qichao—who once said: “He who wants to support people’s power has to support the power of the gentry first!”⁷¹—Tan also identified the interests of the reformist gentry with those of the people

Opponents of the “roving swordsman” or “benevolent man” were those intellectuals who offered their services to the despot. Their function consisted in supporting the hegemonic ideology and in organizing its instruction to secure the identification of the ruled with their ruler. Only the interplay of the despot, the “great robber,” and the intellectuals (the “hypocrites”) had made possible the usurpation of power over such a long period of time.⁷² Between the two poles—“wise man” and “swordsman” on one hand and despot and his intellectual accomplices on the other—existed no intermediary ground.

Although Tan Sitong, in contrast to Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, basically accepted revolution as an instrument of politics,⁷³ he did not believe that the preconditions for a revolution had matured in China. The French Revolution had been possible because of the “learning of the French people.”⁷⁴ Contemplating the cultural and political backwardness of the Chinese masses, Tan, just as Liang Qichao had, considered education to be a necessary prerequisite for the social reform process. He linked the strategy of evolutionary change with the improvement of knowledge, as in a letter to Xu Renzhu (1863–1900) of September 1897: “Our urgent task now is the development of people power, and the development of people’s power means to open people’s knowledge.”⁷⁵

Tan’s notion of the “people’s knowledge” covered a conglomerate of different concepts. Development of knowledge through “studying” meant the acquisition of practical knowledge—namely scientific findings, technical and industrial know-how, and the political and philosophical ideas of Western “new learning,” which were to constitute the foundation of a politically reformed and industrialized Chinese society.⁷⁶ Furthermore, the improvement of “people’s knowledge” would overturn the system of traditional values in the direction of efficiency, excellence, and struggling for innovation. “Studying” also contained participa-

tion in political discourse. In the Hunan reform movement, the idea of “people’s knowledge” received institutionalized form in the study association.

Tan also, though, recognized the limitations of a reform movement. He dismissed the possibility for China of a return to the days of former grandeur. Nevertheless, he thought that reform was necessary for further thoroughgoing social changes. A successful reform would not conclude the process of social reconstruction but constituted a moment in a protracted development.⁷⁷

In the last months of his life, Tan became increasingly aware that a violent conflict with the ultra-conservatives would be unavoidable. In a letter to his teacher Ouyang Zhonggu, written on June 24, 1898, shortly before Tan arrived in Beijing to join the Hundred Days Reform, Tan stressed: “Only if streams of blood will be shed in the struggle between the party of the old and the party of the new, there is hope of rebirth. Otherwise we will perish.”⁷⁸ But in the event of a conflict of this nature, the reformers lacked the necessary bayonets. Thus, when the crucial moment came, Tan had to go to Yuan Shikai (1859–1916) to beg for armed support. Yuan, however, had his own interests to protect and the blood shed in this struggle was Tan’s own.

The Concept of the “People”

What then was Tan’s conception of the “people”? This can only be ascertained with difficulty because Tan never offered a concrete definition and because he did not analyze Chinese society with the eyes of a social scientist. In the Chinese language the concept *min* is characterized by a lack of semantic sharpness (comparable in vagueness to its linguistic equivalents, *volk* in German, *people* in French, and *people* in English). Thus, it is necessary to understand the application of this concept in its specific context. Tan sometimes used *min* in the sense of the traditional Confucian classification of the “four estates” (*simin*): officials, peasants, craftsmen, and merchants.⁷⁹ In the *Ren xue* he attempted to broaden this traditional classification. He mentioned as social groups officials and gentry (*shidafu*), peasants (*nongfu*), craftsmen and workers (*gongyi*), soldiers (*bing*), and servants and day laborers (*yongli*).⁸⁰ Tan listed these classes and strata, but he never supplied an analysis of the mutual relations between them, an identification of their specific social place, or an evaluation of their specific attitude toward the reform movement.

In the context of his strategy of alliances, Tan’s concept of the people was not simply identical to the idea of a “totality of citizens,” although “people” evokes precisely the idea of an undifferentiated social unity.⁸¹ On the contrary, in its formation as an element of political strategy, it cut into society to draw delimitations. In a political strategy such as Tan’s, one that used the notion of the “people” in a binary opposition, the antipode of the “people” would be the *enemy of the people* (in Tan’s political thought, the despotic ruler and his paladins). There may also be other social groups that were not considered constituents of

the people—for instance, the lowest strata in a society consisting of such groups as day laborers, casual laborers, unemployed persons, vagrants, and “bandits.”⁸²

A fundamental delimitation in Tan’s concept of the people becomes clear in the dichotomy between the people and the ruler/despot. Since Tan’s antidespotic stance was closely intertwined with his polemic against the Manchus as the ruling and exploiting elite, the *enemy of the people* seems to have been the Manchus as a whole. However, in practice and in the historical allusions in his writings, Tan designated the ultra-conservative bloc surrounding the Empress Dowager Cixi (1835–1908) as the true political opponent.⁸³ Consequently, it was possible for Tan to participate in the Hundred Days Reform and to support the Guangxu Emperor. In Tan’s strategy the emperor played the role of an enlightened ruler.

To get a closer look at Tan’s concept of the people not as a static, undifferentiated, and ahistorical unity, we need to interpret it as his “*project of alliances*” aiming at economic, political, and cultural change in Chinese society at a particular historical time. To do so, we must go beyond the philosophical texts to examine those writings of his more concerned with political practice. Also, we need to consider Tan’s attempt to transform his political theory into practice during the Hunan reform movement.

The Hunan reform movement represented in Tan’s strategy an effort to start social reconstruction through the implementation of institutional reforms on the regional level. Tan conceived of a more or less self-governing reform region, “Xiang-Yue” (Hunan and Guangdong), the experience from which he wanted to transfer to other regions at a later date. This idea—attaining reform of the entire society through a gradual building up of different “reformed territories” (a kind of encirclement of the center)—should be distinguished from the endeavor to implement reforms by edict through the established administrative channels of the state. Tan unsuccessfully tried the latter after the failure of the Hunan reform movement when he participated in the Hundred Days Reform.⁸⁴

The Hunan reform movement was initiated in autumn 1895 by Chen Baozhen (1831–1900), newly appointed governor of Hunan, who supported a policy of technical modernization and who was ideologically close to Zhang Zhidong. Chen’s reform innovations were, as Charlton M. Lewis put it, “inspired by fears of foreign commercial penetration and by the desire of the elite to keep economic controls in their own hands.”⁸⁵ Within the reform movement existed the program of the technological modernizers who sought to implement the policy of “self-strengthening” while conserving the existing power relations as much as possible. The ideological core of this program was defined by the orthodox principles of “Chinese learning.” The imminent contradiction of the modernizers’ attempt to combine “Westernization” in economic practice (*yong*) with orthodox Chinese learning (*ti*) opened a space for the intervention of the reformers, who certainly shared the aim of economic and technological innovation with the modernizers, but who intended to connect it with a shifting of positions in power relations.

The conflict between these parties was not fought out in the sphere of economic innovation but in the realm of political views. This ideological conflict between modernizers and reformers characterized the second phase of the reform movement in Hunan from autumn 1897 on. In this phase the reformers around Tan Sitong, Liang Qichao, Tang Caichang, Fan Zhui, and others tried to institutionalize their reform strategy, and they were able to dominate the political discourse with their reform ideas. The reformers prescribed the terrain of confrontation, while their adversaries reacted on the defensive.

Thus, many innovations mentioned by Tan as economic achievements of the Hunan reforms, such as the establishment of a machine factory, an oil company, an electric light company, a match company, and banks, as well as the construction of a telegraph line and the opening of a steamship line⁸⁶ were, in fact, projects of the modernizers, frequently initiated by Wang Xianqian, a Hanlin academician and a prominent Hunanese intellectual with political clout, who became a resolute ideological adversary of the reformers.

In addition to economic innovations, Tan spoke of three points essential to the reformers' strategy: the establishment of a new type of school for the purpose of instructing young students,⁸⁷ the setting up of the "study association," and the establishment of a daily newspaper functioning as a public organ of the "study association."⁸⁸ The "study association" was regarded by Tan as an integral element of the reform project. Established in cooperation with the Hunan provincial government, Tan projected the "study association" as an instrument of complex political and sociocultural transformation. It was meant to contribute to communication among reform-minded intellectuals and to work as a board of political strategy. It was assigned to procure communication to intellectuals beyond the reform circle (mainly the bureaucratic intelligentsia) with the aim of gaining political and cultural hegemony. Another field of activity was to be the broad organization of scientific and technological knowledge as well as the spread of political information. Finally, the "study association" even assumed the function of building up professional associations and of initiating a kind of proto-parliament.

The Southern Study Association (Nanxuehui) was established in February 1898 in Changsha and already frustrated in June as a result of the opposition of local conservatives.⁸⁹ It was not accidental that Wang Xianqian began to have doubts about the course of the reform movement when he and Governor Chen Baozhen attended the inauguration of the Southern Study Association and listened to the speeches held there revealing the reformers' plans.⁹⁰

The development of Chinese study associations at the end of the nineteenth century may have had roots in academic-political societies functioning as the organizational bases of academic resistance, such as the dissident literati of the Han dynasty and the Yongjia school of the Southern Song whom Tan had mentioned in connection with his ideal of the "roving swordsman," or chronologically closer, the Donglin society and the Fu she (Innovation Society). Study associations, though, are also reminiscent of the French *Sociétés de pensée* that

sprung up in the cities of France from 1770 on and were precursors of the political clubs of the French Revolution.

With the Southern Study Association, Tan's project of alliances took institutionalized form. The composition of the project of alliances was reflected in the intended functions and the organizational structure of the study association. On the local level the study association was conceived by Tan as a kind of parliament: "Without having the name of a parliament, we will have the reality of a parliament," he noted cautiously, not to provoke the resentment of the conservatives.⁹¹ According to Tan's strategy peasants, merchants and entrepreneurs, workers in factories and mines, scholars, and Buddhist and Daoist monks would be organized into professional associations, and their respective interests would be represented under the shield of study associations.⁹²

Tan planned to establish a network of study associations at a low social level, while the central study association was to fulfill the function of coordination and control of the subordinate local associations. Even with this centralized element, Tan stressed the significance of the local associations. The local associations were entitled to nominate the members of the central association: "All the associations together will employ the local gentry and scholars to guide them. Each Branch Study Association will recommend their local gentry for membership in the General Study Association. The General Study Association will compare their status according to their merits, wisdom, talents, and eloquence, ranking them in order to make evaluations."⁹³ Tan proposed that governors-general, governors, and educational commissioners would enter the General Study Association of each province to "encourage" them, while local officials and school officials would enter the local associations to lead them.⁹⁴

Though Tan had no intention of restricting the membership of a study association to specific groups and strata, he stressed the leading role of the progressive gentry. This was in accordance with his idea that great men were the actors of history. At the same time, Tan tried to include in his project of alliances the mandarinate (at least, the group of technical modernizers) and endeavored to neutralize the conservative local gentry who were behaving in a skeptical or negative manner toward the reform circle. The different social classes and groups Tan named above as essential constituents of the study associations (the working population, merchants, entrepreneurs, intellectuals) may be regarded as the core of Tan's concept of the people.

Tan's organizational structure—guidance by a central study association on the one hand, equal rights to each special study association and each member of each association on the other—stood by analogy next to his "project of alliances" in which the progressive gentry took the lead. The only place where different groups could be integrated was the study association, and this idea of integrating what was different derived from Tan's *ren/tong* philosophy.⁹⁵

A second institution should also be mentioned in this context. The "security bureau" (*baowei*) was planned and established during the Hunan reform move-

ment by Huang Zunxian (1848–1905) by adopting structures of Western and Japanese police systems.⁹⁶ The central importance Tan ascribed to this institution can be seen in his essay, “Ji guanshen jiyi baoweiju shi” (An account of the opinions of officials and gentry on the subject of the security bureau), in which he described the establishment of a “security bureau” as the “starting point of policy.”⁹⁷ By functionally connecting the security bureau to the study associations, the reformers hoped that the security bureau would contribute to a foundation for self-government in Hunan.⁹⁸

The establishment of a security bureau to be jointly managed by government officials, gentry, and merchants was a reaction based on the security needs especially of the gentry and merchants who saw themselves threatened by “thieves, bandits and vagrants.”⁹⁹ In this regard, it served the reformers toward consolidating the reform alliance. Outwardly the organization of a modern police system at the provincial level was seen as an element of the establishment of self-governing territories. In order to define the alliance during the Hunan reform movement more discerningly, we need to know toward which social groups the security bureau was directed. In addition to the struggle against criminality, the bureau was also charged with the arrest of troublemakers, surveillance of suspects, and supervision of trouble spots.¹⁰⁰ Annexed to the security bureau were to be “rehabilitation centers” (*qianshan suo*). Apart from criminals these rehabilitation centers were to accommodate the unemployed, youth who had no training, persons who “disturb the order or defraud other persons,” those who were extremely poor, and notorious idlers.¹⁰¹

A parallel may be drawn here between these statements calling for the control of “disturbers” and Tan’s support for the suppression of local riots. Thus, certain groups within the underclass—destitute peasants, paupers, the chronically unemployed—obviously were not part of the project of alliances.

What I have outlined above was Tan’s project of alliances during the Hunan reform movement as far as it can be reconstructed from the texts deriving from this movement. This is not to say that Tan conceived of no other alliances including secret organizations or even fringe groups. There are a few remarks in his writings and some known historical facts about which we might speculate. We know, for instance, that Tan was on friendly terms with persons who had secret society backgrounds, such as his childhood friend Big Sword Wang the Fifth (Wang Zhengyi, d. 1900). In the *Ren xue*, which was in general more politically radical than the texts with tactical objectives such as his reform writings cited above, Tan, himself the son of a high-ranking official, spoke in full sympathy with the fate of vagrant soldiers and secret society members. He strongly criticized the fact that those vagrant soldiers, labeled “bandits” by the authorities, were persecuted and killed without scruple. Tan evenhandedly laid out the social reasons for the existence of outlaws, and he laid the blame for their miserable destinies on the policies of the Qing administration that recruited and demobilized soldiers as occasion demanded. These groups of outlaws as well as

secret society members were forced by the authorities to live underground, argued Tan, but they were "necessary . . . in human life." By realizing the principle of mutual help, these groups belonged to the realm of *ren*.¹⁰²

There is no direct indication in Tan's writings, however, that he planned to utilize secret organizations as allies, though there have been speculations about it. Huang Zhangjian holds that Tan was in contact with secret organizations such as the Gelao hui (Society of Elder Brothers and Elders) and the Xing Zhong hui (Revive China Society), and that he pushed ahead with the building-up of the Zili hui (Independence Society) together with Bi Yongnian as well as with the creation of an armed unit together with Shi Xiang.¹⁰³ According to Zhang Nanxian, Tan Sitong and Tang Caichang had established contact with secret societies and vagrant soldiers in an effort to start an armed uprising after the prospective failure of the reform movement.¹⁰⁴ Kang Youwei mentioned Tan's plan to liberate the detained emperor with the help of Big Sword Wang the Fifth in a surprise attack.¹⁰⁵ Tan's contemporary Huang Shizhong—a critic of Kang's reform policies and certainly a biased source—pointed out that Tan had planned an armed uprising in Beijing and that Tan's "objective was revolution."¹⁰⁶ He thus placed Tan in contrast to Kang and Liang Qichao. Along these lines Ouyang Yuqian (1887–1962) rated Tan's support of the Guangxu Emperor's reform policy a tactical action.¹⁰⁷ The uprising of the Independence Army, led in 1900 by Tan's friend and comrade Tang Caichang, probably points to a direction Tan could have chosen.¹⁰⁸

In the end the organization of an alliance capable of obtaining political and ideological hegemony failed. The reformist did not succeed in tying a major part of the intellectuals to the reform project, while the technological modernizers of the *yangwu* group withdrew their support in an effort to guard their particular interests. The new type of entrepreneur Tan seemed to have had in mind did not emerge on a large scale at that time.

Thus, the reformers were in a position to attempt ideological leadership only for a short time and only on a local scale. This scope of action had been opened because of the overdetermined conditions of the Hunan reforms. During the Hundred Days Reform—at a time when the failure of the Hunan reforms was already predictable—the reformers tried to transfer their strategy from a local level to the center, basing themselves on the illusion that a reform from above with the support of the Guangxu Emperor would be much easier. Their social basis being too weak, they overestimated their political strength in the struggle for power. By the same token, they were unable to connect the reform project with armed might, and they did not understand—or, in the case of Tan Sitong, realized too late—that the changes they envisioned would, at least in the eyes of their enemies, amount to a revolutionary transformation of the social system. The uprising of the Independence Army in which Tang Caichang in an extended alliance tried to link reform with a revolutionary project was a belated correction of this false estimation and doomed to failure. Tan's solution to the problem after

the *coup d'état* of the reactionaries was courageous but not without a certain pathos of desperation: he decided to die as a martyr. Three days before his death he wrote to Liang Qichao in a letter from his prison cell: "During my lifetime I have not been able to serve my country but after my death I will become a vengeful ghost to help the armies fighting for right."¹⁰⁹

The Heterogeneous Heritage

The disparate approaches of the *Ren xue* led to different lines of reception. Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao laid claim to Tan Sitong for the reformist camp. Liang's biography of Tan (written in 1899), his preface to the *Ren xue* in 1898, and his edition of the *Qingyi bao* version of the *Ren xue* between 1899 and 1901—a second, slightly divergent version edited by Tang Caichang was published roughly at the same time in *Yadong shibao* in Shanghai—were constituent elements of these interpretations.¹¹⁰

Liang argued that Tan had been a disciple of Kang Youwei and had essentially adopted Kang's political and philosophical ideas; this was, of course, true in the broadest sense inasmuch as Tan, as with many intellectuals who participated in the reform movement of 1898, had been influenced by Kang's ideas.¹¹¹ Liang pointed out that Tan never had any revolutionary aims and he had accepted a martyr's death out of loyalty to the Guangxu Emperor.

Young national revolutionaries such as Chen Tianhua, however, saw Tan as an "impetuous hero who shed his blood for the country's sake."¹¹² The revolutionary Zou Rong had by his seat a portrait of Tan Sitong accompanied by a poem calling for men to follow Tan's example.¹¹³ In his political pamphlet *Geming jun* (The revolutionary army), written in 1903, Zou cited Tan's anti-despotic and anti-Manchu positions in numerous passages.¹¹⁴ Another revolutionary Yang Dusheng (1871–1911)—like Chen Tianhua born in Tan's native Hunan Province—wrote an essay entitled "Xin Hunan" (New Hunan) wherein Tan was understood as the successor to Wang Fuzhi and a model of a revolutionary Hunanese.¹¹⁵ The antidespotic and anti-Manchu chapters of the *Ren xue* were reprinted under the title "Jun huo" (Calamities caused by the monarch) in *Huangdi hun* (The soul of the yellow emperor), an influential anti-Manchu pamphlet edited by Huang Zao in 1903.¹¹⁶ Wu Yue, in his effort to foment revolution by exploding a terrorist's bomb, justified his theory of assassination by citing Tan's idea of the "roving swordsman."¹¹⁷

The popularity of the *Ren xue* among the younger generation of educated Chinese during the first two decades of the twentieth century is attested by an article published in 1922 by Kiang Shao-yuen in *The Open Court*: "The Science of Love [namely, the *Ren xue*] is one of the most widely read and discussed books in modern China. . . . The fact that its author was immolated resulted in making his name known to all intelligent Chinese, in making him beloved by all progressive Chinese. Prohibition of the reading of his book by the Manchu

government only gave it additional prestige. Ten years ago, to have failed to read it was a disgrace for an educated Chinese.”¹¹⁸

A special line of reception formed in Hunan. In 1898 a student by the name of Yang Changji (1871–1920) had attended Tan’s lectures at the Southern Study Association. His reading of the *Ren xue* was an important mental experience at the time.¹¹⁹ Later Yang became a teacher at the First Normal School in Changsha and transmitted the central ideas of the *Ren xue* to his students. Among those students was Cai Hesen (1895–1931) who was inspired by Tan’s idea of “cutting through the nets” and connected it with Lenin’s concept of emancipation.¹²⁰ Cai’s close friend Mao Zedong (1893–1976) was pondering the problem of how to rid Hunanese society of the stagnation in which it had become stuck following the foundering of Tan’s and Liang’s reform project and was impressed by Tan’s idea of “mind-power” and Tan’s resolute way of acting.¹²¹ Thus, Tan’s thought—especially his idea of destroying the hierarchical structures of society and his belief in the omnipotence of will power—had a profound effect on the protagonists of the New Cultural Movement during the May Fourth period.¹²²

Notes

1. *Tan Sitong quanji* (Collected works of Tan Sitong; hereafter, *TQJ*), ed. Cai Shangsi and Fang Xing (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), vol. 1, p. 233. See also Chang Hao, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis: Search for Order and Meaning* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), p. 69.
2. *Chunqiu fanlu* (Beijing: Sibu congkan edition, 1936), *juan* 7, chapter 23, pp. 36–10a. See also Fung Yu-lan, *History of Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), vol. II, pp. 69 *passim*; and *Han shu* (History of the Han dynasty), (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), *juan* 56, “Dong Zhongshu zhuan” (Biography of Dong Zhongshu), p. 2518. Tjan Tjoe Som, *Po Hu T’ung: The Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1952), vol. 2, p. 555.
3. *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 233.
4. *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 232.
5. Chan Sin-wai, *An Exposition of Benevolence: The Jen-hsüeh of T’an Ssu-t’ung* (hereafter, *Expo*) (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1984), p. 167.
6. *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 232.
7. See Peter Weber-Schäfer, *Oikumene und Imperium: Studien zur Ziviltheologie des chinesischen Kaiserreiches* (Munich: P. List, 1968), pp. 15ff.
8. *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 233.
9. *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 233f. See also Chang Hao, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis*, p. 69.
10. *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 233.
11. *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 233. Some of the statements in Tan’s lecture at the Southern Study Association, published under the title “Lun jinri xixue yu Zhongguo guxue” (Present-day Western learning and ancient Chinese learning) in 1898, seem to echo this opinion (*TQJ*, vol. 2, pp. 399f), but at the same time Tan criticized the notion of *tianxia* in another lecture, “Lun xuezhe bu dang jiao ren” (Scholars should not be arrogant), (*TQJ*, vol. 2, pp. 401–03); see also Charlton M. Lewis, “The Hunanese Elite and the Reform Movement, 1895–1898,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 29.1 (1969), p. 39.
12. *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 223.

13. To the continuities in Tan's thought belong his emphasis on the importance of moral action, a conception that he connected with his idea of a moral and political avant-garde, be it a "wise man" as in the "Shijuying lu bizhi" (Notes from the Shijuying Studio), written 1888-94, published in 1897, or be it the "roving swordsman" as in the *Ren xue*.

14. The change in Tan's views, though, did not come like a bolt from the blue. In the early nineties, deviations from the conceptions of the "Zhi yan" are noticeable. Tan's analytic and scientific interests led him to an interest in Western natural science, as can be seen in his "Shijuying lu bizhi." In 1893 Tan visited Shanghai where he was confronted with the manifestations of Western economic expansion. In Shanghai he met the British missionary John Fryer (1838-1928), head of the translation bureau of the Jiangnan Arsenal. Tan bought a number of translations of Western books on science published by the Jiangnan Arsenal and the "Christian Literary Society" (Guang xuehui). For biographical and psychological factors at this turning point in Tan's outlook, see Luke S. K. Kwong, "Reflections on an Aspect of Modern China in Transition: T'an Ssu-t'ung (1865-1898)," in *Reform in Nineteenth-Century China*, ed. Paul A. Cohen and John E. Schrecker (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1976), pp. 185ff.

15. "Xing suanxue yi" (A Proposal to promote the learning of mathematics; June 1895), in *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 160.

16. "Siwei yiyun tai duanshu xu" (A short discourse from the Siwei Yiyun Studio; 1896), in *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 225.

17. *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 198.

18. "Bao Tang Caichang shu" (A letter in reply to Tang Caichang; October 26, 1896), in *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 249f.

19. *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 463. In the *Ren xue* Tan mentioned problems involved in the organizational embodiment of "people's rights," "people's rule," and similar ideas but only discreetly. Questions like separation of powers, universal suffrage, and the legal protection of democratic rights were neglected or left in the abstract. Compared to Kang Youwei's *Datong shu*, the absence of practical plans in the *Ren xue* is striking.

20. Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, *Intellectual Trends in the Ch'ing Period*, trans. Immanuel C. C. Hsü (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 109f.

21. Chen Ciliang (Chen Zhi), *Yong shu* (The book of the mean) (repr. Taipei: Guofeng chubanshe, 1970), p. 325; also in *Wuxu bianfa* (The 1898 reform movement), ed. Jian Bozan (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1957; hereafter *WXBF*), vol. 1, p. 245.

22. Hao Yen-p'ing, "Cheng Kuan-ying: The Comprador as Reformer," *Journal of Asian Studies* 29.1 (November 1969), p. 19.

23. *Shengshi weiyan* (Words of warning to awaken the age), cited in *WXBF*, vol. 1, p. 58.

24. Of course, half the population, women, had no right to vote.

25. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 463.

26. Tan acknowledged the possibility of a rupture in the continuity of despotic rule. In periods of "small tranquility" (*xiao kang*), such as the Western Han dynasty and the initial phase of the Tang dynasty, communications between the ruler and the people could be temporarily recovered. *TQJ*, vol. 2, pp. 336, 344; *Expo*, pp. 148, 165.

27. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 401.

28. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 370; *Expo*, p. 220. Tan's ideas corresponded on the whole to Kang Youwei's doctrine of the "Three Ages" (*san shi*). The common reference point of Tan and Kang was "Han learning." Many scholars argue that Kang's conception influenced Tan, but I think that the possibility cannot be ignored that the *Ren xue* also affected Kang's thought, because Kang finished the *Datong shu* and other important works only after the failure of the reform movement and the martyr's death suffered by Tan. On this problem

see Cai Shangsi, *Zhongguo jinxiandai xueshu sixiang shi lun* (On the history of Chinese learning and thought in modern times) (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1986), pp. 100f. Furthermore, as Tang Zhijun notes, it is not clear that Kang had systematized his doctrine of the "Three Ages" from 1896 forward under the impact of Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* (translated by Yan Fu); see Tang Zhijun, *Wuxu bianfa shi luncong* (A collection of essays on the 1898 reform movement) (Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 1957), pp. 129ff, 147ff. Leaving aside the problem of publication dates, however, we do not know enough about the discourse internal to the reformers, which was an important medium for the exchange of ideas. Tan did not see himself as an immediate disciple of Kang Youwei (see Tan's letter to Ouyang Zhonggu from February 1896, *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 455) and noted that when he compared his own thought to what was known to him of Kang's ideas, they were "eighty to ninety percent" the same (*TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 445). See Douglas David Wile, *T'an Ssu-t'ung: His Life and Major Work, the Jen-hsüeh*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1972, p. 125; Zhang Dejun, "Liang Qichao ji Tan Sitong shi shishi bian" (Clearing up the inaccuracies in Liang Qichao's biography of Tan Sitong), in *Zhongguo jin sanbai nian xueshu sixiang lunji er bian* (Second collection of articles on Chinese learning and thought of the past three hundred years) (Hong Kong: Zhongwen shudian, 1971), pp. 245f.

29. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 367; *Expo*, p. 215.
30. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 370; *Expo*, p. 220.
31. See Richard Shek, "Some Western Influences on T'an Ssu-t'ung's Thought," in *Reform in Nineteenth-Century China*, ed. Cohen and Schrecker, pp. 197ff.
32. See Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, in *Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1989), vol. 12, pp. 496f.
33. Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 85; *Zhang Wenxiang quanji* (Collected works of Zhang Zhidong), *juan* 202, pp. 24b-25a; (Taibei reprint: Wenhai chubanshe, 1963), p. 3715.
34. The idea of "mind-power" was also influenced by Henry Wood's *Ideal Suggestion through Mental Photography*. See Richard Shek, "Some Western Influences," pp. 200ff; and Sakamoto Hiroko, "Tan Sitong de *Ren xue* he Wute Hengli de *Zhi xin mian bing fa*" (Tan Sitong's *Ren xue* and Henry Wood's *The Prevention of Disease through Mental Healing*), *Zhongguo zhuxue* 13 (1985), pp. 164-75.
35. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 367; *Expo*, p. 215. In the "Shijuying lu bizhi," Tan already spoke about the discontinuity of the ego, and the unity of the ego and the non-ego referring to the *Yijing* and the *Zhongyong* (*TQJ*, vol. 1, pp. 132f).
36. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 370; *Expo*, p. 220.
37. *TQJ*, vol. 2, pp. 291, 293ff; *Expo*, pp. 62f, 67f.
38. *TQJ*, vol. 2, pp. 295ff; *Expo*, pp. 73ff.
39. Tan had read Kang's *Xin xue weijing kao* (An examination the forged classics of the Xin Period); see *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 445.
40. Tan's idea of manipulation of mind was not beyond the scope of the conventional notion of the "deceit of the priests." In a certain deviation from this point, he also too held the view that bad vibrations caused by bad karma emanating from the rule penetrated the whole country. Only the moral and meditative effort of the individual mind-power could overcome this spell (*TQJ*, vol. 2, pp. 356f; *Expo*, pp. 193ff). Again this stand was contradicted by Tan's idea that "names" were imaginary effects of the projections produced by the subjectless "store-consciousness" (*âlaya vijñâna*), a view Tan borrowed from Yogâcâra Buddhism. On this issue, see Chan Sin-wai, *Buddhism in Late Ch'ing Political Thought* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1985), pp. 93ff.
41. *TQJ*, vol. 2, 336; *Expo*, p. 148.

42. “Zheng jie pian xia” (Rectification of delimitations, 2), in *Yi jiao cong bian* (Compilation of texts for the protection of Confucian teaching), ed. Su Yu, *juan* 4, p. 31a. Certainly neither Ye Dehui nor the reformers including Tan Sitong were primarily interested in a comprehensive view of Mencius’s political thought

43. Teng Ssu-yü and John K. Fairbank, *China’s Response to the West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 167f; *Zhang Wenxiang quanji*, *juan* 202, pp. 24a-24b; Taibei repr., p. 3715.

44. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 334; *Expo*, p. 143.

45. Tsou Jung, *The Revolutionary Army: A Chinese Nationalist Tract of 1903*, trans. John Lust (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1968), p. 18; Wu Yue, *Ansha shidai* (The time for assassinations), in Zhang Nan and Wang Renzhi, eds., *Xinhai geming qian shinian jian shilun xuanji* (A selection of articles from the decade prior to the 1911 Revolution), (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1962), vol. 2b, p. 718.

46. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 343; *Expo*, p. 164.

47. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 334; *Expo*, p. 143.

48. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 345; *Expo*, p. 167.

49. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 344; *Expo*, p. 164.

50. *Expo*, p. 167 (*TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 345).

51. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 345; *Expo*, p. 167f.

52. *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 18.

53. *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 40; a partial translation of this biography can be found in Wile, *T’an Ssu-t’ung*, pp. 14–16.

54. *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 41f.

55. *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 144.

56. *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 31.

57. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 356; *Expo*, p. 193.

58. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 361; *Expo*, p. 202.

59. “Xing suanxue yi,” in *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 156. See also *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 205, and vol. 2, p. 297 (*Expo*, p. 74). A similar attitude was shown by Kang Youwei, “Shang Qing di diyi shu” (First memorial to the emperor), in *WXBF*, vol. 2, p. 123.

60. “Zhi Liu Songfu, ba” (Letter to Liu Shanhan, no. 8; April 1895), in *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 484; “Zeng Liang Lianjian xiansheng xu” (A Preface Presented to Mr. Liang Baoying; January 1898), in *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 281; and “Zhi Liu Shiheng, san” (Letter to Liu Shiheng, no. 3; February 1898), in *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 526f.

61. “Siwei yiyun tai duan shu,” in *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 205. For Zhou Han, see Yang Shiji, “Zhou Han yu fan-Yangjiao douzheng” (Zhou Han and the struggle against Western religion), in *Hunan lishi ziliao* 4 (1958), pp. 36–57; and Charlton M. Lewis, *Prologue to the Chinese Revolution: The Transformation of Ideas and Institutions in Hunan Province, 1891–1907* (Cambridge, MA: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1976), pp. 28ff, 110.

62. “Zhi Wang Kangnian, Liang Qichao, san” (Letter to Wang Kangnian and Liang Qichao, no. 3; July 10, 1897), in *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 517.

63. Teng and Fairbank, *China’s Response to the West*, p. 167, also p. 173f.

64. “Zhi Liu Songfu, ba,” in *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 484.

65. Mengzi, book VIIB, chapter 14.

66. *Expo*, p. 165 (*TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 344).

67. See “Bao Liu Songfu shu, yi” (Letter in Reply to Liu Shanhan, no. 1; winter 1894), in *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 8; “Zeng wuren shi” (Poem for a Swordsman; written before 1894), possibly dedicated to Tan’s friend, Big Sword Wang the Fifth, in *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 243f. The idealization of the “roving swordsman” may be traced to Tan’s own practice of martial arts. See Ouyang Yuqian, “Shang Ouyang Banjiang shi shu xu” (Preface to Tan

Sitong's letters to Ouyang Zhonggu), in *Tan Sitong quanji* (Complete works of Tan Sitong), ed. Cai Shangsi (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1954), p. 518. For Tan's concept of the "roving swordsman," see Takata Atsushi, "Tan Shidō ni okeru 'ninkyō' no shisō Jijin no shisō to seishin no renzokusei ni tsuite" (Tan Sitong's idea of "renxia": The idea of voluntary death and the continuity of the mind), *Tōyō joshi daigaku, hikaku bunka kenkyūjo* 25 (1968), pp. 19–81.

68. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 289, *Expo*, p. 56.

69. *Expo*, p. 165 (*TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 344). On the Popular Rights Movement, see Gotō Yasushi, *Jiyū minken undō no tenkai* (The development of the movement for freedom and people's rights), (Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 1966).

70. Lu Xun, *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1976), p. 340. *Sanxia wuyi* was written by Shi Yukan and published in 1879.

71. "Lun Hunan ying ban zhi shi" (On problems to be solved in Hunan; 1898), in *Yinbingshi wenji* (Writings from an Ice-Drinker's Studio) (repr. Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), vol. 2, part 3, p. 43.

72. *TQJ*, vol. 2, pp. 335ff; *Expo*, pp. 146ff.

73. The negative appraisal of revolution as an instrument of politics can be seen in Kang Youwei's "Faguo geming ji" (An account of the French Revolution), in *WXBF*, vol. 3, p. 3. See also Liang Qichao, "Li xianfa yi" (On the establishment of a constitution), in *Yinbingshi wenji*, vol. 2, part 5, p. 4.

74. *Expo*, p. 163 (*TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 343).

75. "Yu Xu Renzhu shu" (Letter to Xu Renzhu), in *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 270.

76. Tan stressed the necessity of a fundamental industrialization of China. The capital investment of the "rich" would enable the "poor" to earn their living. A maintenance of the dependent relations in the economic sphere would be accepted for a longer period, but Tan believed that free economic development would finally level the difference between rich and poor. In any event, the realization of equality was suspended in the sphere of economy. Tan expected a new type of entrepreneur to develop from sectors of the gentry. The entrepreneur played a part in the economy of an avant-garde similar to the role the reformist intelligentsia was to play in the political process. Both were propelling powers in extinguishing the differences in the political and economic realms. In the sense of economic liberalism, Tan advocated the free interplay of forces and spoke of the necessity of preventing the concentration of capital in the hands of a few.

77. "Xing suanxue yi," in *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 157.

78. "Shang Ouyang Zhonggu, ershi yi" (Letter to Ouyang Zhonggu, no. 21; June 23, 1898), in *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 474. See also Liang Qichao's biography of Tan, in *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 546, *Expo*, p. 43f.

79. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 347 (*Expo*, p. 172), and pp. 431, 437.

80. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 362, *Expo*, p. 203.

81. Brecht referred to the concept of *volk* as an "artificial unity." See Bertold Brecht, *Metibuch der Wendungen*, in *Gesammelte Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1967), vol. 12, p. 534. Brecht spoke of "das künstliche Einheitliche" (artificial unity).

82. For a discussion of the ambiguity of the notion of the "people," see Gérard Fritz, *L'idée du peuple en France du 17ème au 19ème siècle* (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 1988).

83. See his last letter to Liang Qichao, in *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 519. For Tan's last words approaching death, see *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 287; for a translation, see Wile, "T'ang Ssu-t'ung: His Life and Major Work," pp. 167, 171. For historical hints, see *TQJ*, vol. 2, pp. 289, 355, *Expo*, pp. 56, 190.

84. Tan arrived in Beijing on August 21 to join the movement, and one month later he was beheaded as a "traitor and heretic" on September 28 at Caishikou, an open field near

the Xuanwu Gate. See Yang Tingfu, *Tan Sitong nianpu* (Chronological biography of Tan Sitong) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1957), p. 118.

85. Lewis, *Prologue to the Chinese Revolution*, p. 43.

86. "Yu Xu Renzhu shu" (Letter to Xu Renzhu), in *TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 270. See also *Hunan jin bainian dashi jishu* (Record of major events in Hunan over the last century) (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1959), p. 1, pp. 134–38.

87. The model school was the Shiwu xuetang (School of Current Affairs), established in October 1897, in which Liang Qichao became dean of "Chinese Studies."

88. "Xiangbao houxu xia" (Second postscript to *Hunan Daily*), in *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 418. *Xiangbao* was edited by Tang Caichang from March 1898 on.

89. The model for the "Nan xue hui" or Southern Study Society was the "Qiang xue hui" or Strengthening Study Society, established by Kang Youwei in Beijing in 1895.

90. Lewis, *Prologue to the Chinese Revolution*, p. 60.

91. Ronald R. Robel, "T'an Ssu-t'ung on *Hsüeh Hui* or 'Study Associations,'" in "Nothing Concealed": *Essays in Honor of Liu Yüyün*, ed. Fredric Wakeman, Jr. (Taibei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1970), p. 176 (*TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 438). The reader of *Xiangbao* was more frankly informed of this function of the Southern Study Association. See "Wen xue hui shi ze" (Ten questions about the study association), in *Xiangbao leizuan* (Classified compilation of *Xiangbao*), (Shanghai: Zhonghua bianyi yinshuguan, 1902), *bing shang*, p. 5; (Taibei reprint: Datong shuju, 1968), vol. 1, p. 415.

92. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 438; Robel, "T'an Ssu-t'ung on *Hsüeh Hui*," p. 175.

93. Robel, "T'an Ssu-t'ung on *Hsüeh Hui*," p. 175 (*TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 438).

94. Ibid. In the "Siwei yiyun tai duan shu," Tan spoke about the delegation of deserving members of the gentry in a future national assembly (*TQJ*, vol. 1, p. 362; Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, p. 160). Not overstepping ideas of the early reform generation, Tan even lagged behind the more advanced ideas of Zheng Guanying, who had taken into consideration a combination of the traditional appointment system with an electoral system. In Tan's conception of 1896, a parliament constituted a kind of a committee of nobilities, which in its composition was not representative of various social groups, strata, and classes. Universal suffrage was not included in Tan's considerations.

95. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 437f; Robel, "T'an Ssu-t'ung on *Hsüeh Hui*," pp. 172ff.

96. Ironically, the "security bureau" was the only institution of the Hunan reform movement that survived the conservative counterblow. See Noriko Kamachi, *Reform in China: Huang Tsun-hsien and the Japanese Model* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1981), p. 223.

97. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 426f. Tang Caichang and Liang Qichao called it "the foundation of the new policy." Tang Caichang, "Hunan she baoweiju yi" (On the establishment of a security bureau in Hunan), in *Tang Caichang ji* (The works of Tang Caichang), (Beijing: Beijing shuju, 1980), p. 138; Liang Qichao, *Wuxu zhengbian ji* (An account of the 1898 reform movement) (Taibei: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), p. 143. See also Kamachi, *Reform in China*, p. 222.

98. Kamachi, *Reform in China*, p. 222.

99. Kamachi, *Reform in China*, p. 223.

100. "Hunan baoweiju zhangcheng" (Bylaws of the Security Bureau of Hunan), in *Xiangbao leizuan*, p. 558. See also Deng Tanzhou, "Shiji shiji mo Hunan de weixin yundong" (The reform movement in Hunan at the end of the nineteenth Century), *Lishi yanjiu* 1 (1959), p. 20f.

101. "Hunan qianshan suo zhangcheng" (Bylaws of the Hunan Rehabilitation Center), in *Xiangbao leizuan*, p. 564.

102. *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 347, *Expo*, p. 172.

103. Huang Zhangjian, *Wuxu bianfa shi yanjiu* (Studies in the history of the 1898

reform movement), (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1970), p. 358.

104. Zhang Nanxian, *Hubei geming zhi zhi lu* (An account of the revolution in Hubei) (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1945), p. 22.

105. *K'ang Yu-wei: A Biography and a Symposium*, ed. and trans. Lo Jung-pang (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1967), p. 134.

106. A Ying (pseud. Qian Xingcun), *Wan-Qing xiaoshuo shi* (History of the the novel in the late Qing) (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1937), p. 127. See also A Ying, *Huang Xiaopei de xiaoshuo* (The fiction of Huang Xiaopei), in *A Ying wenji* (The writings of A Ying) (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1979), vol. 2, p. 772. For Tan Sitong as a revolutionary, see Tang Caizhi, "Wuxu wenjian lu" (Documents of the 1898 reform movement), in *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 552f.

107. Ouyang Yuqian, "Shang Ouyang Banjiang shi shu xu," in *Tan Sitong quanji* (1954 edition), p. 518.

108. Tang Caichang tried to ally with Zhang Zhidong. Leaders and ordinary members of secret societies, officers and rank-and-file soldiers of the Qing army whom Tang had recruited and paid, and even Japanese *rōnin* belonged to Tang's army. The uprising of the Independence Army was suppressed by Zhang Zhidong. Nonetheless, utilizing secret organizations to launch an uprising anticipated an important element of the 1911 Revolution. See Zhang Bozhen, in *WXBF*, vol. 4, p. 283, also p. 91. For the uprising of the Independence Army, see Pi Mingxiu, *Tang Caichang he Zili jun* (Tang Caichang and the Independence Army) (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1984).

109. "Zhi Liang Qichao, san" (Letter to Liang Qichao, no. 3; September 25, 1898), in *TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 519.

110. For a translation of the biography and Liang's preface, see *Expo*, pp. 35–48, 51–53.

111. On the other hand, Liang Qichao emphasized the significance of the *Ren xue*: "We did not reach Tan's ideas; we did not dare to speak as he spoke. Never has there been a piece of writing like this in China." See *Qingyi bao* 100 (1901), p. 6, Taipei repr.: Chengwen chubanshe, 1967, vol. 12, p. 6297. Kang Youwei took a similar view in his "Liu ai shi" (Six Lamentations), written in 1902 (*TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 548).

112. Chen Tianhua, *Meng hui tou* (About Face!), in *Xinhai geming* (The 1911 Revolution), comp. Chai Degeng et al. (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1957), vol. 2, p. 146; Zhang Shizhao, "Shu Huangdi hun" (Comments on the *Huangdi hun*), in *Xinhai geming huiyilu* (Reminiscences of the 1911 Revolution) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), vol. 1, p. 226.

113. Zhongguo jindai shi conshu, ed., *Zou Rong* (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1974), p. 10.

114. Tsou Jung, *The Revolutionary Army*, pp. 18, 41.

115. Zhang Nan and Wang Renzhi, *Xinhai geming qian shinian*, vol. 18, pp. 617f.

116. *Huangdi hun* (Taipei repr.: Zhongyang wenwu gongying she, 1958), pp. 7–18.

117. Wu Yue, *Ansha shidai*, vol. 2B, p. 718, approvingly citing the *Ren xue* concerning the idea of the "roving swordsman" (*TQJ*, vol. 2, p. 344; *Expo*, p. 164).

118. Kiang Shao-yuen, "The Philosophy of Tang-Szu-Tung," *The Open Court* 36 (August 1922), p. 450.

119. Yang Changji, *Dahua zhai riji* (Diary from the Dahua Studio) (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1981), p. 165. See also Pang Dacheng, *Hu Xiang wenhua yu Mao Zedong* (Hunan culture and Mao Zedong) (Changsha: Hunan chubanshe, 1991), p. 80; and Li Rui, *Mao Zedong tongzhi de chuqi geming huodong* (The early revolutionary activities of Comrade Mao Zedong) (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1957), p. 22.

120. Cited in Wang Shubai, *Mao Zedong sixiang yu Zhongguo wenhua chuantong* (Mao Zedong thought and the Chinese cultural tradition) (Xiamen: Xiamen saxue chubanshe, 1987), pp. 135f.

121. See Mao's essay "The founding and progress of the 'Strengthen Learning Society,'" in *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings*, vol. 1, *The Pre-Marxist Period, 1912–1920*, ed. Stuart R. Schram (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1992), p. 369. When Mao was studying under Yang Changji, he wrote a (now lost) composition on the "Power of Mind" (Xin zhi li), possibly referring to Tan's concept of "xin li" (mind-power) which Yang gave prominence to. See Wang Shubai, *Mao Zedong sixiang*, pp. 105, 111.

122. Li Dazhao's (1889–1927) texts, "Qingchun" (Spring), "Xiangyuan yu da dao" (Hypocrites and Big Robbers), and "You jingji shang je shi Zhongguo jindai sixiang biandong de yuanyin" (Explaining the changes in modern Chinese thought with economics), all show Tan's influence. See *Li Dazhao wenji* (The writings of Li Dazhao), (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 194–205, 619, and vol. 2, pp. 178f.

Dynasty, State, and Society: The Case of Modern China

Murata Yūjirō

The concept of the nation-state replete with sovereignty and territory took shape in modern China at the end of the nineteenth century after the defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95. Certainly, the military invasion of the powers from the Opium War (1840–42) forward—“gunboat diplomacy”—had given rise to a national sense of crisis among all living under the Qing dynasty. As a result of blow after blow in wars fought against foreign aggressors and the conclusion of peace treaties, Qing China was compelled to become incorporated into the international multistate system. As was the case elsewhere in Asia, however, contacts with the Western countries with their military and economic superiority did not immediately lead to the creation of a new “national community.” The nation took form as an “imagined community” (in the language of Benedict Anderson), the most important element of which was the fact that a sense of crisis with respect to the outside world combined with an orientation toward institutional reform.

The Baoguohui (Protect the Nation Society): The Origins of Modern Nationalism

The turning point in the case of modern China was probably the string of domestic reforms—the *Wuxu bianfa* of 1898 and the Xinzheng reforms at the end of the Qing—which unfolded from the end of the nineteenth century into the beginning of the twentieth. In the fourth month of 1898, Kang Youwei (1858–1927), the theoretical leader of the Hundred Days Reform movement, promptly began a movement aimed at arousing public opinion. The association that he formed by

rallying together officials and scholars sympathetic to the reforms at this time took the name Baoguhui. “Baoguo” implied “protecting the nation’s land, people, and religion,” as stated in the “Baoguhui zhangcheng” (Rules of the Protect the Nation Society). It was here, undoubtedly, that for the first time the image of a “national community” in place of the dynastic system was publicly suggested. At the inaugural meeting of the group convened on the seventeenth day of the fourth month at the New Yuedong Hall in Beijing, Kang Youwei stood before some 200 members and began his fiery, rabble-rousing speech as follows:

Our 400,000,000 Chinese people, be they high or low in status, are now under an overturned house, under a leaking boat, on top of a burning torch. Like birds in a cage, fish in a kettle, or prisoners in jail, we have become slaves, draft animals, dogs and sheep. We are ordered about at will by others and remain under their control. In 4000 years and twenty dynasties, this is an unprecedented turn of events.¹

“Our 400,000,000 Chinese people” possessed a shared, communal consciousness of their fate, for, “be they high or low in status,” all were being equally abused by the foreign powers and were suffering pain and humiliation. This point is linked directly to the emphasis on national self-awareness contained in another passage from the same text: “nowadays people have a responsibility for the perishing realm, and they have the power to save the realm, too.” What needs to be pointed out here is the fact that there was a kind of political magnetic field in which the expression “our 400,000,000 Chinese people” which Kang used repeatedly in this speech could still be parried with shock and provocation at that time. In fact, Manchu officials who looked with animosity upon the reforms learned of Kang’s activities and directly memorialized the throne, stingingly attacking the Baoguhui: it “protects the 400,000,000 Chinese and takes no account of our great Qing state.”² Of course, from the perspective of the orthodoxy of “one sovereign and a myriad people” (*yijun wanmin*), the slogan “protect the nation” was a treasonous act which could not be dismissed. Under censure of this sort from the conservatives, the Baoguhui had no choice but to disband soon thereafter.

A deep power crevice emerged by chance between the dynastic system (the Qing) and the nation-state (China) in the late nineteenth century. Furthermore, because the Qing was an alien regime for the Han Chinese, racial and ethnic issues could not help but come more sharply into focus. On September 29, shortly after the strangulation of the Hundred Days Reform, an imperial edict read: “We have heard again that the aforementioned rebellious party [namely, Kang Youwei and his followers] have secretly founded the Baoguhui which, it is said, will protect China but not protect the Qing dynasty. This criminal behavior truly makes us bristle in anger.” For the Empress Dowager and the Manchu ruling stratum, the expression “baoguo” was a dangerous sign clearly intended at demolishing the foundation of their rule. For those who put the Guangxu Em-

peror under house arrest in a coup d'état, "China" now appeared to be threatening the "Qing."

It should be noted for the sake of understanding that the political objective of the Hundred Days Reform movement was, of course, not the overthrow of the Qing dynasty. The circumstances were just the contrary, as the conceptual plan of the 1898 Reforms concentrated uniformly on securing the power and authority of the Guangxu Emperor, and thus the movement in fact aimed at the establishment of an even more thoroughgoing system of "one sovereign and a myriad people." In this sense it was an attempt (ending before it could be completed) at a Chinese-style absolutist revolution. As is well known, Kang himself was opposed to the rise of the idea of an anti-Manchu revolution from the time of the Boxer Rebellion and always raised the banners of "protect the emperor" and "constitutionalism." He firmly stood for the cause of defending the Qing dynastic system.

The issue here, however, is not the well-known political debate over republican revolution or constitutional monarchy. What is important here is the fact that, as the discovery of the "nation" in this period testifies, a fundamental change emerged in the epistemological arrangements surrounding state power. In other words, as the image of a "national community" grew to maturation, the crevice, a kind of structural cleavage in the undergirding of the political symbols, was growing. The "incident" which best embodied this development can be seen in the Xinheng reform edict issued in January of 1901. Just a little over two years after the 1898 coup, the Empress Dowager (1835–1908), having learned from her failures in dealing with the Boxer Rebellion, effectively accepted the reform movement, as the edict ordered higher central and local officials to offer suggestions with alacrity on "court regulations, state affairs, administration, popular livelihood, schools, the civil service examination system, military systems, and finances." In spite of the qualification that "while the Kang rebels spoke of new institutions, they fomented rebellion and did not effect reforms," the concrete measures were clearly adopted from the 1898 reform movement, and the Xinheng policies of the Guangxu era were begun with this edict. The Empress Dowager, cast throughout the last forty or more years of the Qing dynasty in the most "reactionary" role, found herself pressed by circumstances and had no choice but to commence reforms aimed at prolonging the life of the Qing dynasty.

It is surprising, though, that in this not especially long edict we find the term *Zhongguo* (China) used three times. For example, "China's weaknesses lie in the great depth of its traditions, the intricacies of its codes, the large number of its mediocre officials, and the small number of its great men." The subject of dynastic authority, which until then had been symbolized by the "court" or the "Great Qing," was replaced with extraordinary ease by "China," as if the coup edict of two years earlier had never existed. For the Empress Dowager and conservative officials, of course, the meaning and content of "Great Qing" and "China"

should subjectively have been of equal importance, and they by no means were embracing Kang Youwei's notion of "protecting China." However, "China" had now come to the fore in an edict, the public language of the authorities, and institutional deficiencies as well as radical reforms were beginning to be discussed openly.

A dynasty of "one sovereign and a myriad people" versus a state of "400,000,000 people." Needless to say, it was the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 that exposed to the light of day the opposition between these two that could not be simply patched over. Confronted with the Boxer movement that swept over the North China region, the Qing government recklessly issued a declaration of war on the powers, then to the contrary invited to the capital in Beijing the Eight-Power Joint Expeditionary Army, and on the basis of the Beijing Protocols (the *Xinchou tiaoyue*) took a decisive step toward acquiring subordinate status to the imperialist powers. The dynastic system, which had been amassing setback after setback in an atmosphere of "internal chaos and foreign disasters" from the end of the previous century, was effectively exposing its incomplete ability to function in its late years. It is worth noting that amid the disorder high-level Han Chinese officials, such as Zhang Zhidong (1837–1909) and Liu Kunyi (1830–1902), who held sway in Central and South China, concluded a neutrality pact with the powers (the *Dongnan hubao yuekuan*). In so doing they were semi-publicly expressing their alienation from the central government over foreign policy. As we shall see below, as local high-level officials who were Han Chinese gained control over the military forces of various parts of the country, following the chaos of the Taiping Rebellion, the central government was weakened in its effective control over these localities, and now the Qing dynasty was even losing its legitimacy as the basis of state control.

In the face of such critical circumstances, the Xinzheng policies were belatedly mobilized as a last resort. They ironically culminated in the increasing alienation of the urban elite—the constitutionalists—who were concentrated in the provinces and at the nationwide level. In the call for an anti-Manchu restoration that surgically arose both at home and abroad, the 1911 Revolution brought down the Qing. As Wenti (d. 1900) had predicted early on, the constitutionalist movement to which the reform movement and Xinzheng policies of the late Qing gave birth was developing in a direction of "protecting the 400,000,000 Chinese and ignoring our great Qing state."

"The Fixed Institutions of the Heavenly Dynasty" and Their Transformation: From the Realm to the State

As the case of the Baoguhui demonstrates, the issue of nationalism in modern China was above all portrayed as a conflict or contradiction between the dynastic system and the principle of a modern state. From the perspective of the Qing, it was a process of trial and error in an effort to respond and adapt to the new

international environment, at the same time that the dynastic system was being drawn forcibly into the “international society” of the expanding modern West. This change is best reflected in Chinese recognition of the outside world and the transformation of Chinese views of the foreign world.

The change in Chinese views of the outside world in the late Qing, if we may borrow an expression that Kang Youwei was fond of using, might be characterized in the change from “*yitong chuishang*” (uniform order in the realm) to “*lieguo jingzheng*” (competition among the powers). The term *yitong chuishang* implied the entire world of all under heaven. The notion of “all under heaven” or *tianxia* entailed a single, stratified, total order based on principles of differentiation (involving ritual and decorum) at the basis of the transcendent authority of heaven. At the center of the *tianxia* was the son of heaven (the emperor) who received the mandate of heaven, and with the emperor at its pinnacle the *tianxia* possessed a structure that expanded and grew larger as it moved from the center toward the periphery. There was no world outside of the *tianxia*, for it was itself a single, complete “world system.” What differentiated its stratified order were not the ethnic indices of race, ethnic group, religion, or language, but the presence or absence of the ritual system of “culture” or *wenhua*—namely, Chinese civilization. Although “barbarian peoples” fell outside the civilized sphere, once they became favored with the grace of *wenhua*, they might all be incorporated into the world of *tianxia* (this was the “way of the kings” or *wangdao*). Accordingly, the world of *tianxia* was the propagation and, ideally, the limitless expansion of *wenhua* to the peripheral regions. Eventually, subordinate nations on China’s periphery would embrace the humanity and morality of the emperor, and then ultimate “great peace” (*taiping*) in the *tianxia* would arrive. It would be a world in which, according to the Gongyang School, “the barbarians would advance to attain ranks of nobility, and all within the *tianxia*, far and near, large and small, would be as one.”³ The ruling principles of the Chinese empire were rooted in *wen* (culture) and not *wu* (military), and in *wenhua* and not *minzu* (ethnicity). Thus, even if in this world there were peoples that did not make use of Chinese characters, they could thus receive heaven’s mandate and rule the *tianxia* insofar as they embodied Chinese civilization (or *wenhua*). This was the ideal that justified the conquest of China by the Manchus in the seventeenth century, and as the Kangxi (r. 1662–1722), Yongzheng (r. 1723–35), and Qianlong Emperors (r. 1736–96) themselves demonstrated an active assimilation to Chinese civilization, they had built their dynasty to the height of prosperity.

The world of the *tianxia* that was the Chinese empire was qualitatively different from the modern nation-state in the sense that it was not a sovereign state on an equal footing with those outside it. More than anything else, it lacked the elements of sovereignty and territory, considered conditions for the formation of the modern state. They might have recalled the fact that in the latter half of the nineteenth century, China successively lost frontier areas, the most well known case being the response of Qing officials to the Taiwan Incident. In 1871 an

incident erupted when fishermen from the Ryūkyū Islands were shipwrecked in Taiwan, and a number of them were murdered by “aborigines” there. When Japanese Plenipotentiary Soejima Taneomi (1828–1905) visited Beijing in 1873 to exchange ratifications of the Sino-Japanese Peace Accords, he probed to see if his counterparts on the Chinese side understood the Taiwan affair. To his surprise, the Qing government expressed the position that it bore no responsibility in the matter because the “aborigines” in Taiwan were an uncivilized people who had not submitted to civilized ways. From the perspective of modern international law, this declaration of intentions which could not but be interpreted as a relinquishment of sovereignty doubtless encouraged Japan to send expeditionary forces to Taiwan the next year. This incident was one among many, and the Qing eventually fell victim to an invasion of its frontiers by the covetous powers.

It confuses the matter fundamentally to discuss the system of rule in the Chinese empire, which existed autonomously based on the ideal first and foremost of government by the kingly way (moral rule), in the absence of nation, territory, and sovereignty. The reason is that it originally took shape on the basis of a sort of universalistic principle aimed at the rule by a uniform “culture” that transcended terrain and ethnicity. Those of us who know the travails that modern China has undergone cannot forget that the principles of civilization which transcend territory and race became for Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen, 1866–1925) the intellectual basis for anti-authoritarianism and anti-imperialism, a doctrine of ethnic self-determination rooted in “universal principle” and “the way of the kings.” This is not, of course, to ignore the aspect of military control which can be seen historically as imperial investiture. Facing demands by the powers, beginning with Great Britain in the nineteenth century, to open its doors, the Qing government demonstrated its unchanging self-confidence in its view of the world as *tianxia* when it called its own institutional system “the fixed institutions of the heavenly dynasty.”

The history of China in the late Qing followed a course in which the world as *tianxia*, with the structure and distinctive characteristics as outlined above, became incorporated heteronomously into modern international society then expanding into East Asia. Unlike past subordinate states and tribute-bearing nations, the international society that dynastic China confronted at the time was the arena of “competition among the powers,” a game of power politics in which sovereign states vied for the acquisition and expansion of rights and privileges. However, as noted at the outset, it was not the case that this “impact of the West”—a contact with an other qualitatively different from any other till that point—alone made possible the transition from *tianxia* to nation-state. At least, in comparison with *bakumatsu*, Japan’s smooth transition to opening its doors, the path taken by modern China seems to have been characterized by a tenacious sense of continuity in its traditional concept of the civilized and the barbarian. In order to elucidate this point below, let us now look briefly at the history of late Qing foreign relations.

It is ordinarily argued that the Qing dynasty opened China after the Opium War. The Qing, however, only established diplomatic relations on an equal footing with foreign states when it created the Zongli Yamen (Foreign Office) in 1861. Before this, as indicated in the treaty negotiations following the Opium War, the Qing fervently resisted negotiations on equal terms with Great Britain. As a result of the Treaty of Nanjing, at most the Qing, in addition to the opening of five ports, only recognized the formal parity of bilateral authorities in the exchange of documents. The demands of the British for the permanent stationing of diplomatic missions and an imperial audience were continuously rejected throughout. Of course, the powers started with this and using the weapon of most-favored-nation status slowly but surely acquired such special diplomatic privileges as consular jurisdiction and an agreed upon customs system. Interestingly, Qing officials who ought to have been pressured by the unequal treaty system never considered this situation negative for themselves. In fact, they considered the equality of benefits gained through most-favored-nation status as the dynasty's blessing of "universal benevolence" and hence it was an extension of the past policy of "barbarian affairs."⁴

It was the Treaties of Tianjin and Beijing, signed between 1858 and 1860, that caused the Qing dynasty, under pressure from the powers, to transform its foreign policy from "barbarian affairs" to "Western affairs." In other words, after being defeated in the Arrow War (1856), the Qing gradually came to recognize on the basis of these treaties the foreign embassies permanently resident in Beijing and asserted that it would not use the Chinese character *yi*, meaning "barbarian," in official documents. In 1861 the Zongli Yamen was established as the diplomatic mechanism replacing the Court of Colonial Affairs (Lifanyuan) of the Ministry of Rites. It was decided soon thereafter to dispatch missions to the countries with which China had treaties and to set up legations. Thus, from the 1860s through the 1870s, China's diplomacy responded closely to the early Westernization movement in domestic politics and moved toward a fundamental "modernization." We need to pay attention, though, to the fact that this string of attempts at institutional reforms did not spell the immediate dissolution of the older concept of *hua-yi* (civilized and barbarian). In a sense it was the image of the fixed institutions of the dynasty that preserved the fortress till the very end in the face of foreign pressure. Despite many concessions and compromises to the powers, they continued to hold firm throughout the period of the late nineteenth century.

For example, the Qing dynasty persisted till the bitter end in the ceremony of the imperial audience. This was an issue that repeatedly caused troubles in the arena of foreign affairs from the entrance into the capital of the British delegation at the end of the eighteenth century. According to the stipulations of the *Da Qing huidian* (Statutes of the Great Qing Dynasty), tribute bearers from tribute nations perforce carried out the three kneelings and nine knockings of the head (the kowtow) before the emperor at the time of the audience. Seeking equal

diplomatic footing, the powers consistently refused to accept. In the Tianjin Treaty of 1858, the principle of bilateral equality was confirmed and, in fact, the three kneelings and nine knockings were revoked as a diplomatic ritual. In spite of this, however, in the face of demands for audiences with the Tongzhi Emperor from the ministers of the powers, the Qing government demanded as before the carrying out of the ritual of the kowtow and would not yield. The powers, of course, strongly opposed this, and at the end of negotiations a compromise was reached of five bows; in 1873 the first imperial audience was held. Yet, the place at which these audiences would transpire was not inside the palace, so closely eyed by the powers, but the Ziguang Pavilion, located in the neighborhood of Zhonghai to the west of the palace. This was the place used by the Qing emperors to hold audiences with tribute-bearing missions (the Ziguang Pavilion is now frequently used by the Communist government to meet foreign guests). In state rituals, however, the equivalence between diplomacy and tribute-bearing based in the concept of civilized and barbarian was still not completely wiped away. Foreign delegates were actually allowed audiences at the palace for the first time in 1894, the year when hostilities erupted between Japan and China. This was understood as implying that for the first time a diplomatic form of equal standing had been adopted, at least insofar as a building was designated to that end.⁵

This is just one example, but by the late nineteenth century we know that the transformation of the *hua-yi* image was not a simple matter. Despite the renunciation of the *hua-yi* concept in formal matters in the 1870s and 1880s, already clearly the case in Li Hongzhang's foreign policy, Chinese officials' understanding of the outside world operated as before within the framework of the system of traditional imperial investiture. What they used in actual foreign negotiations was a theory of the "autonomy of subordinate states" in which, insofar as the subordinate states (such as Taiwan, Ryūkyū, and Korea) accepted Chinese investiture and revered the Chinese reign titles, China did not interfere in their domestic politics or foreign relations.⁶ To repeat, then, the decisive change of circumstances occurred after the start of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95. During the period when the sense of crisis especially among modernizing, "enlightened" officials was nearing an unprecedented rise, the concept of the "nation" or "citizenry" (*guomin*) gradually emerged as a new symbol of the ethnic community.

The man who invested most heavily in disseminating the new term *guomin* was Liang Qichao (1873–1929), who after the defeat of the 1898 Reform Movement took refuge in Japan. Shortly after becoming a refugee, he published "Lun jinshi *guomin* jingzheng zhi dashi ji Zhongguo qiantu" (On the overall situation surrounding the competition among modern nations and the future of China) in *Qingyi bao*, a journal he published in Yokohama, and in it he criticized with a stinging literary style the Chinese view of the world as *tianxia*. "Chinese people do not know what a nation is. For 2000 years they have just known the two characters, *guo* [state] and *jia* [family], and not once have they heard the two-

character term *guomin*. . . . *Guojia* [the state, the court] implies that the state has been made into the private property of a single family, whereas *guomin* implies that the state has become the public property of the populace.”⁷ “Competition in the world today,” he continued, was not primarily “a competition among states” as in the past, but the era of “competition among nations.” What was thus truly important at this point in time, he argued, was for the nation to be conscious of its power (*guomin li*) and to make it grow. In short, he encouraged the “nation to have a patriotic heart,” and he amplified this position in the articles, “Zhongguo jiruo suyuan lun” (Going back to the roots of Chinese decrepitude, 1901) and “Xinminshuo” (On the renovation of the people, 1902).⁸

According to Liang, the basis of China’s “decrepitude” lay in the fact that it only had the concepts of *tianxia* and *yiji* (oneself) and lacked “national thought” (*guojia sixiang*). In “Xinminshuo” he wrote of “national thought” that it was “to know there is a nation with respect to the self, to know there is a nation with respect to the court, to know there is a nation with respect to the outer court, and to know there is a nation with respect to the outside world.” The central point of “Xinminshuo” was his advocacy of fostering, in addition to this national thought or national identity, a “public morality” (*gongde*) appropriate to the nation. Yan Fu (1853–1921) covered similar ground in his writing on “people’s morality (*minde*), people’s knowledge (*minzhi*), and people’s power (*minli*).” The urgent question then became how to recast the older “people of the *tianxia*” (“a sheet of sand,” according to Sun Zhongshan in his later years) into a “nation” with “public morality.” The intellectual impact that this argument of Liang Qichao’s had on his contemporaries at the end of the Qing dynasty was extraordinarily great.

At the same time as Liang Qichao and others of the enlightenment movement were active, signs of significant changes were appearing in the existential modes of authority of the dynastic system itself. This was an issue of how the emperor’s power adapted itself within the new discursive space carved out by the concept of the “nation.” The decisive transition here occurred with the emergence of the Principles of the Constitution presented by the Constitutional Editorial Committee (an advisory organ of the central government established to see the preparation of a constitution completed) in August 1908. This first constitution in Chinese history was to be composed of fourteen articles concerning the “great authority of the sovereign” and nine supplementary provisions concerning “powers and responsibilities of subjects.” It was to be drafted and deliberated over a nine-year period of stages in the preparation of a constitution. The Principles of the Constitution pointed in the basic direction of the draft constitution, and clearly the first and second articles concerning the sovereign’s authority were based on the example of Meiji Japan’s constitution of 1889: “The great Qing emperor rules the great Qing empire, and for 10,000 generations in a single line he shall be eternally revered. . . . The sovereign possesses divine sanctity and is inviolable.”

The issue to be focused on here is neither the nature or special qualities of the

Principles of the Constitution nor their historical significance. Rather, inasmuch as shortly after the Qing put forward a preparatory constitution it was itself destroyed in the 1911 Revolution, effectively the Principles of the Constitution had scarcely any legal consequence. Far more important than the articles themselves was the fact that the constitution symbolized the Qing's first effort to regulate the essence of imperial power in the form of legal standards. The preamble that the Constitutional Editorial Committee attached in presenting the Principles of the Constitution is an important constitutional commentary which deserves to be read along with the Principles themselves:

A constitution is the basic law of a state. Sovereign and subject preserve it together. From the Son of Heaven to the ordinary people, all must follow it and no one may transgress it. All constitutional countries east and west do not have the same national polity. Although their constitutions may differ, the most essential elements are but a few points. First, the sovereign is sacred and inviolable. Second, the sovereign controls power and in carrying this out he illuminates the constitution. Third, the subjects possess rights and obligations which they need acquire and use to the full in illuminating the laws.⁹

For the drafters of the constitution who had received their instructions in the name of the emperor, the indispensability of the principles of modern constitutionalism was reflected in their rationalization of the existing dynastic control. While the expression that the "Son of Heaven" (despite who he was) was the same as "ordinary people" in that he had to "follow" the constitution was a stipulation of the Principles that made the "great authority of the sovereign" prominent, it nonetheless clearly had the impact of limiting the sovereign's powers with the constitution. The religious and ritual authority invested in the emperor's powers, although imitated in the articles of the principles, were completely eviscerated.¹⁰ We have here the "secularization" of imperial power. It was as well the end of "traditional control" (as Max Weber used this concept) by an autocratic dynasty such as had ruled China for over 2000 years since the Qin and Han eras.

At about the same time that the Principles of the Constitution were presented, Liangjiang Governor-General Duanfang (1861–1911), one of those responsible for preparing the constitution, memorialized the throne concerning the enactment and promulgation of "rules for the imperial household" together with the "imperial constitution." This was one part of the legal preparations which he had himself learned during a trip to Meiji Japan to observe constitutional institutions. It was adopted as an article on "Promulgation of Regulations on the Imperial Household" in the ninth—namely, the last—year of the constitutional preparation schedule drawn up by the Constitutional Editorial Committee. Like the Principles of the Constitution, this should be seen as something that won the court's approval. Both were the first (and also last) attempts by the Qing dynasty to incorporate into a legal state structure the power and authority of the emperor

and the legitimacy of his rule. Contrary to the intentions of those concerned, ironically, it inspired a movement which questioned anew the legitimate basis itself of dynastic power. As we will discuss below, in the constitutional petition movement which swelled throughout the provinces and at the national level, the enactment of a constitution and the speedy convening of a parliament surfaced as the biggest political issues of the day.

The Rise of Local Elites and Local Autonomy

Behind the formation of the enlightenment ideas of the “nation” represented in Liang Qichao’s “Xinminshuo” and the decisive changes in the authority that legitimated dynastic control was a process of disturbance within the social order and its reorganization that became ever more obvious throughout the nineteenth century. If we might change our perspective somewhat, let us now examine the transformation of local political society which made possible the discourse of enlightenment nationalism (people’s rights and autonomy, constitutionalism, and the like) of the late Qing and especially the changes in the local elite stratum which formed the basis for the reception of this national citizens’ consciousness.

It is well known that the glory of the Qing empire which had boasted an unprecedented terrain during the orderly reign of the Qianlong Emperor in the eighteenth century was beginning to decline gradually in the nineteenth century after having experienced nine years of the White Lotus Rebellion (1796–1804). An explosive population rise together with the development of commercial production as had never been experienced before flooded through local society and exacerbated class oppositions and social contradictions. Despite political stability on the surface, below the surface of society there were immense fluctuations in the earth’s crust. In addition, mass rebellions (the Taipings, the Nian, and the Muslims) successively arose from the middle of the nineteenth century, seriously weakening the Qing’s institutions of control. At the time of these institutional crises, local braves and *tuanlian* units were organized as armed self-defense forces to put down the rebels in various southern provinces, replacing the standing armies (Green Standards) of the Qing, which were on the verge of destruction. It was Han Chinese officials such as Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang who stood in the forefront of local armed might. Assigned to high-level positions (governor-general and governor) in the central and southern provinces, they took control of local military power and eventually grew to become forces with sway in the political world at the center. Furthermore, in order to compensate for mammoth military expenditures, the Qing government had perforce to accept on the spot procurements of war expenditures, thus increasing the powers of governors and governors-general gradually. Be it the fighting against the Taipings or the industrial production of the early Westernization movement, the Qing government would have been weakened to the point of complete debility had it not asked for their help in holding onto local territory. The descent of military,

administrative, and fiscal powers from the center to the localities—in other words, the tendency toward the decentralization of power into the local areas—was the principal historical trend characterizing nineteenth-century China.

During this period it was not only the high-level local officials (governors and governors-general) who came to the fore in the process of decentralization of power. The dissolution and reorganization of the social order exerted a great influence at the base of local society below the county and department. The major focus of this local administration was the relationship between the government (public authority) and the local elite (gentry and merchants). For the local administration, the rapid growth of the middle Qing and the rise of social fluidity had the effect of increasing the great burden of administrative services and expenses. The central government still tried to achieve control by preserving the existing administrative system without forging a policy that would respond to this situation. The result was a low rate of efficiency of the bureaucratic machinery, which was small in scale compared to the size of China's population and resources, and a considerable expansion of the administrative vacuum. One example would be that in spite of the increase nationwide in the number of market towns, generically called *shizhen*, from the late Ming and early Qing era when the development of commerce exploded, the number of counties (*xian*), the low-level administrative units that should have overseen them, remained fixed at about 1500 throughout the Qing dynasty. If we were to take the Han and Tang as baselines, then adjusting this figure for the rise of population and resources would probably increase the number of *xian* in the Qing period several times to a figure of about 8000.¹¹

Not only did the scale and density of administrative units not change, but the government's fixed system of tax collection found it difficult to increase annual revenues for the state treasury, which was based on the mobilization of social resources. Thus, the trend, noted above, toward the local decentralization of power in the nineteenth century seems to have increasingly deepened the separation between the fixed structure of administration and finance and the actual complexities of local administration. One should pay attention here to the fact that the Qing government as the locus of public authority sought to bury this estrangement by allocating distinct powers and functions to the local elite, while preserving the existing administrative system.

By the same token, faced with a rising population and an ever more complicated local administration, local elites including the local gentry participated in public affairs, such as tax assessment and collection, and by shouldering the responsibility for local public works, such as water utilization, education, and philanthropy, they increasingly acquired social and political influence. For example, from the Jiaqing period (1796–1820) forward, the self-governing customary practice known as the *xiangdong* system which had spread through the Jiangnan region was a typical case of this. In this system, local men of influence were proposed as managers and were given responsibility to assist local officials

in public projects such as water management. As representatives of the locale, these managers functioned to bring the interests of the local gentry and the local populace into the local administration.¹² The tendency of the local elite, standing outside of the bureaucratic structure, to replace the weakened public authority and participate actively in local public projects grew not only in village society but also widely in urban guilds and merchant associations. In a recent work discussing the development of autonomous mechanisms in nineteenth-century Hankou, William T. Rowe describes the activities of commercial elites who were strengthening their participation in the urban administration as a phenomenon of administrative privatization by the public authorities (the provincial bureaucracy), and he analyzes in great detail the antagonistic relationship between the state and Hankou society.¹³

The opposition and interdependence between the state bureaucracy and local elites in nineteenth-century China was affirmed by a mechanism for local autonomy known as the *gongju*, or public office, which was established in many locales at this time. For example, with the establishment of a *gongju* in late Qing Sichuan, local governments entrusted to the local elites such administrative matters as the maintenance of public order and supplementary tax collection, known collectively as "local public affairs." In return they shared prestige in the form of honors awarded by the court for loyal, meritorious behavior. Because this helped fill in the areas where control was lacking which had emerged in the increasingly complex nature of local administration, it was effectively a policy measure taken by the public authorities. And it was the newly risen, local elite, known as *shenliang* (from *shenshi* or gentry and *lianghu* or landlords) who were responsible for the operations of the *gongju*.¹⁴

The institution of *gongju* was not only to be found in Sichuan, as studied by Yamada Masaru, but apparently extended widely to other provinces in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The pioneer in introducing modern institutions of local self-government was Kang Youwei. In his 1902 essay "Gongmin zizhi lun" (On citizens' self-government), he pointed to the existence of *gongju* at the provincial, prefectural, departmental, and county levels with the example of his native Guangdong. As Kang saw it, having gone through the turmoil of the Xianfeng reign period (the Taiping Rebellion), the gentry *tuanlian* created self-governing organizations known as *ju* for as few as several villages to as many as several dozen villages in order to protect the local villages. They carried out such tasks as tax collection. The Nanhai *ju* in Kang's hometown, he noted, oversaw thirty-six villages and some 50,000 persons; there were two *ju* heads who were the responsibility of the local gentry, and when disputes arose among the local people, twenty *ju* braves under the command of military officials were mobilized to restore public order.

The changes in relations between the state (bureaucrats) and society (local elites) in local administration describes on the whole a tendency toward relative independence on the part of the latter in the nineteenth century. For local society

this meant a rise in the position of elites who had been storing up their economic strength together with the development of commerce and the expansion of communications. By the same token, when seen from above, one can locate a readjustment of relations on the part of the public authorities with respect to locally resident elites who were in the process of strengthening their capacity as spokesmen locally. In other words, what gave confirmation to the public activities of local elites who were emerging at the department, county, and provincial levels was the autonomous mechanism of the *gongju*, and it was this trend that sought to include these elites additionally at the edges of the bureaucracy by sharing a certain measure of administrative power with them.

Under these circumstances, advocacy of local autonomy, linked as it was to the “debate on feudalism” (*fengjian lun*) from the late Ming and early Qing period and the debate on popular rights, began to circulate among the enlightened elites in the late nineteenth century. The debate on *fengjian* refers to a kind of decentralization of power to the localities which was raised in criticizing the *junxian* (centralized) system that had supported the dynastic structure since the Qin-Han empire. The one passage written by Gu Yanwu (1613–82), well known from the late Ming and early Qing for his writings on *fengjian*, in which he advocated “investing the *junxian* system with the spirit of the *fengjian* system” (from his work “Junxian lun” [On the centralized state]) was cited more and more frequently by late Qing writers on the issue of *fengjian*. The secret to its popularity lay in his stress on the need to remedy the misgovernment of rampant bribery, the dominance of *yamen* clerks and runners (namely, low-level minor officials), and the alienation between officials and the populace, born of the rule of avoidance in the centralized bureaucracy and short terms of appointment (officials who owed their positions to their having passed the civil service examinations could not serve in their home areas, and their terms of service were usually limited to three years’ duration) and on the need to entrust the duties of local administration to “local officials” and “local offices” selected from local men of civic virtue and morality. When the development and mobilization of a “national” energy for the purposes of modernization became consciously understood as critical matters, the tradition of local autonomy was retrieved from popular memory as a debate on *fengjian*.

The issue of *fengjian* had once been the subject of a lively debate at the transition from the late Ming into the early Qing, but with the establishment of Qing rule it became increasingly a politically taboo subject to raise in public. Just as Gu Yanwu’s arguments had once been, this perspective on *fengjian* was directly linked to a radical critique of the existing institution of “one sovereign and a myriad people.” During the reign of the Yongzheng Emperor who worked vigorously to strengthen the underpinnings of an authoritarian monarchy, *fengjian*, it was concluded, meant selfishness or *si* whereas the *junxian* system of centralized government was associated with *gong* or public-mindedness: “After the Qin and Han eras,” wrote the emperor in an edict of 1729 (seventh month,

third day), “the territory became the emperor’s. When the feudal system came into effect, many became selfish. Thus, with the *junxian* system it turned to public-mindedness (*gong*).” As indicated in the criminal case brought against Nian Gengyao (d. 1726, governor-general of Shaanxi and Sichuan), the court understood the expansion of the powers of the bureaucracy as a group as a serious threat to public authority—namely, “forming cliques and working for personal profit” (*jiedang yingsi*).¹⁵ Thereafter, the issue of *fengjian* was regarded as words of *lèse majesté* and became the object of intellectual suppression, and it effectively disappeared from gentry discussions of statecraft.

The revival of the debate over *fengjian* at the end of the Qing meant a weakening and hollowing of the Qing’s autocratic regime directly personified by the Yongzheng Emperor. More broadly speaking, though, it reflected the impasse reached by the centralized *junxian* system of the Qing, described above. What needs to be pointed out here in connection with the debate over *fengjian* is the tendency toward specialization of the elite as seen in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In a word, the elite underwent a transition in function from Confucian scholar-officials (*shidafu*) to modern professionals. Members of the early Westernizers group, such as Feng Guifen (1809–74) and Zheng Guanying (1842–1922), who in the late Qing first supported *fengjian* as a means of enhancing local autonomy, had scarcely any careers as examination bureaucrats; it is suggestive in this sense that they worked largely as staff members (private advisors) to provincial governors. Basically marginal to the examination system, they worked also as managers of Western-style enterprises and as compradores to foreign commercial establishments; for the time, they possessed the abundant store of available Western knowledge. On the staffs of local governors, they acquired a familiarity with the actualities of bureaucratic politics, and they became the pioneer critics of the *junxian* system, the wrecked examination system, and the abuses of bureaucratic corruption.

The abolition of the examination system in 1905, needless to say, accelerated the specialization of the elite and its tendency toward autonomy. Beginning already from the latter half of the nineteenth century with the rise of gentry who managed commercial enterprises and gentry members who obtained bureaucratic positions—collectively known as “gentry-merchants” (*shenshang*)—the string of institutional reforms in the late Qing Xinheng reforms produced in large numbers members of such new social strata as new army officers, teachers and students in the new-style schools, students abroad, businessmen, and journalists. It was they who served as bearers of late Qing nationalism, on the one hand raising the banner of “rich nation and strong army” while on the other supporting “popular rights and constitutionalism”—and all the time fortifying their demands against the Qing government for greater political participation. The most conspicuously active group particularly at this time was the urban elite living in the port cities, first and foremost Shanghai. They had the greatest opportunities for contact with foreigners and to that extent were the first to show signs of a

“national” (or “civic,” *guomin*) consciousness. About the time that the Xinheng reforms commenced, they began showing more interest in “national affairs” (*guoshi*) and “national prosperity” (*guoyi*), no longer solely being concerned with the localities and groups under their control or their consanguinal organizations.

What gave them a unique stage for their words and deeds was the emergence of a national press, symbolized by the Shanghai newspaper, *Shenbao*. The fact that from the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth the runs of newspapers and magazines at various places throughout the country increased dramatically is frequently interpreted as the birth in modern China of a popular press. In the case of *Shenbao* whose inaugural issue appeared in 1872, they began mailing it out of Shanghai in 1880, and it spread to such distant regions as Beijing and Tianjin in the first half of the 1880s, establishing itself as a national newspaper. In 1895 it was said to have had a run of 15,000. In 1882 telegraph lines were opened between Shanghai and Tianjin, and that made it possible to send copy of news from Beijing and Tianjin to Shanghai in two or three days. With the development of the newspaper medium, a new situation emerged in which Tianjin merchants could observe market conditions in Shanghai and engage in speculation; similarly, people from Ningbo living in Shanghai could learn the news in Hangzhou of a fire in their native city. The articles that appeared in this paper covered every arena of politics and society from imperial edicts to disputes among ruffians in the marketplace. People who until that point had not had contact across regions or social groupings now for the first time were able to forge contacts as “readers” through newspaper articles. They had acquired a sense of unity as a “nation” (*guomin*). Newspaper journalism in modern China forged a “national community,” and one cannot stress strongly enough the role this national community played. Using the new media of newspapers and magazines as weaponry, the urban elite thereafter strengthened its personal and intellectual solidarity that transcended localities, and ultimately this formed a “public opinion” (*yulun, gonglun*) at the national level.¹⁶

State and Society in the Late Qing: Bureaucratic Power and Gentry Power

In the late nineteenth century, the organization which the elite began to form transcending the local area was the *xuehui* or study association. The beginning of this essay touched on the Baoguohui, the largest scale association of this sort organized at this time. About the same time that the Baoguohui was founded, study associations cropped up throughout the country, and their numerous organs began publication. The study associations of that time were seen as a starting point for the awakening of gentry power and thence popular power, as can be seen in Liang Qichao’s famous sentence: “If we wish to promote popular power, we should first promote gentry power; if we wish to promote gentry power, we should begin with study associations” (“Lun Hunan yingbian zhi shi” [On mat-

ters in Hunan that should be handled].¹⁷ What is referred to here as gentry power implies the political participation of the local gentry—who mediated between officials and commoners—in particular, the newly risen urban gentry stratum. Under the influence of this encouragement for reform by Liang Qichao, the Nanxuehui or Southern Study Association was organized in Hunan with the aim of “serving simultaneously as the model for a local assembly.” It became a base for the reform movement and played a great role in spreading the idea of popular power (*minquan*).

Huang Zunxian (1848–1905, at the time Acting Hunan Provincial Surveillance Commissioner), who had taken part in the first lecture series of the Southern Study Association, was a leading player along with Liang Qichao in the Hunan reform movement. At the lectures, he developed the debate over *fengjian* squarely in alignment with Liang’s views on schools. One of the most interesting parts of Huang’s argument was the comparison he drew between *junxian* and *fengjian* in their relationships to *gong* and *si*. “Although the installment of officials in the *junxian* era was extremely *gong*, the governmental form was extremely *si*.” Thus, if they were to install local officials from the localities and “they themselves ruled in those local areas,” then perhaps “we could reap the advantages of generations of *fengjian* and do away with the abuses of *junxian* autocracy.” If such autonomous rule were extended from the village to the county and from the county to the province and to the entire nation, he argued, then China would be able to reach the “prosperous government of a republic and the thriving path of the Great Unity,” the most *gong* of all (“Nanxuehui diyici jiangyi” [The First Speeches at the Southern Study Association]).¹⁸ This view was, of course, a 180 degree turn away from the Yongzheng Emperor’s position that with “*fengjian* many acquired selfish minds” and criticized “*junxian* autocracy” itself for “seeking selfish advantage with a selfish mind.” This conception of things that linked *fengjian* style autonomy with *gong* was already a self-evident assumption among the political reformers in the late Qing, just as Zheng Guanying, who early on in the 1890s had advocated the introduction of a parliamentary system, argued: “The establishment of a parliament betokens a great *gong*, selflessness (*wuwo*), and the unity of those above and below” (*Shengshi weiyian* [Warnings to the seemingly prosperous age], “*Yiyuan*” [Parliaments], part 1).¹⁹

Originally advocacy of “great *gong*” and “opposition to selfishness” in views supporting *fengjian* or the local autonomy to strengthen gentry power worked by contrast to justify the local gentry elite’s search for personal profit. In fact it was frequently noted in the late Qing that it was the local gentry who had feathered their own nests under the name of public good for the locality. As is well known, in the Republican period the “local bullies and evil gentry” who held sway in the villages became the targets of attack by the rural revolution. Despite this, the fact that this became a theoretical basis—conceptualized as “*dagong wuwo*” (Zheng Guangying) and “natural justice” (Kang Youwei)—for criticizing the Qing struc-

ture of “one sovereign and a myriad people” is necessary for understanding the transformation of political authority in modern China. For example, we can see in the following passage a view thoroughly permeated with a more radical conception of popular rights than those of its contemporaries, such as Huang Zun-xian, who emphasized the principles of “public” (*gong*) and “fairness” (*ping*) in politics and the law.

Gong and *ping* are the foundations of the nation. *Gong* is absence of self (*wusi*), and *ping* is an expression of unbiasedness. That which is *gong* will be enlightened, and if enlightened it will serve the hearts-and-minds of the common people. The sovereign and the people do not have different hearts-and-minds. That which is *ping* will be favorable, and if favorable it will handle the affairs of the common people. The sovereign and the people do not have separate affairs. . . . Whether something is *gong* or not or whether it is *ping* or not can be corroborated by the trust of the people, and only then will true *gong* and true *ping* be obtained. It is the sovereign who establishes this and the people who follow. It is the officials who implement it and the people who receive it.²⁰

At this stage, advocacy of popular power in the late Qing had moved beyond criticizing monarchical autocracy which privatized the realm—a point repeatedly stressed by supporters of *fengjian* from the late Ming and early Qing—and had advanced to reflecting on basic principles of the system of “one sovereign and a myriad people” itself. Thus, the argument was raised that, while relying on the principle of *gong*, the basis of the relationship between the sovereign and the people needed to be reexamined; as the text cited immediately above stated: “The realm is the instrument of the public (*gong*), and national affairs are the affairs of the public (*gong*). The instrument of the public is shared by the public, and the affairs of the public are handled by the public.” The *gong* here refers to the *gong* of the *gongju*, the *gong* of local public affairs, and the *gong* of public opinion on national affairs.

Perhaps the thinking behind popular power as expressed in “public affairs” and “public opinion” which had effectively caused the positions of *gong* and *si* to be reversed in the relationship between sovereign and populace took shape in some form amid the fluid political scene of the late Qing. The focal point of the late Qing constitutional movement was principally not the abstract issue of the hierarchical relations between the sovereign and the people. The point of greatest contention on both the stage of national politics and local administration was the issue of defining the limitations of the powers of the local elite with respect to public power—namely, the issue of coordinating the interests of “official power” and “gentry power.” In considering the relationship between state and society in modern China, the change in official-gentry relations at this juncture is a theme that cannot be bypassed. As one example of this, let us take a look at the collision that transpired between official and gentry power which was fought out

on the stage of the provincial assemblies (Ziyiju) and the Political Advisory Board (Zizhengyuan).

The central issues in the political world during the last decade of the Qing were constitutions and parliaments. As noted above, with the Xinzhenzhi edict of 1901, the Qing government adopted a string of political measures, including administrative reforms, educational measures, the abolition of the civil service examination system, and the sending of students overseas for training, but the introduction of the constitutional system was placed on the agenda only after the Russo-Japanese War. Japan's victory in this war provided a shock of immense proportions to Chinese officials and common people as an indication of the superiority of constitutionalism vis-à-vis autocratic politics. Amid the heightening nationwide demands for constitutionalism, the Qing government issued its edict on constitutional preparation (September 1, 1906) in the form that restrained public opinion high and low. "At present the time has arrived for us to consider and observe and put into effect constitutional government. *Supreme power is controlled by the court and the various matters of governance will be handled together with public opinion.*"²¹ Thus the state will establish a moral foundation to last for 10,000 years." With this signal, "public opinion" on the issue of a constitution rose through the country, and rising influences were brought to bear on the government. The group that took responsibility for this move in most localities, as noted earlier, was the urban elite (provincial gentry) who were pressing forward with the trend toward independence. When this edict was issued, at the provincial and national levels they sought arenas for political participation and forged a political bloc known as the constitutionalists. Early on in Shanghai in November 1906 a national federated organization, the Constitutional Preparation Association—centered around such Jiangnan gentry-merchants as Zhang Jian (1853–1926, later head of the Jiangsu Provincial Assembly), Tang Shouqian (1857–1917), and Zheng Xiaoxu (1859–1938)—was formed and a petition movement to convene a parliament was begun.

Under these circumstances the Qing government pressed on with bureaucratic reforms and legal preparations for the transition toward a constitutional system; at the same time, it decided to establish a Political Advisory Board at the center and provincial assemblies in each of the provinces as parliamentary organs for officials and the populace (edicts of September 20 and October 19, 1907). Having gone through a fixed set of procedures for the election of representatives, the provincial assemblies would convene in all of the provinces on October 14, 1909 (the first year of the Xuantong reign). As past studies have made clear, the establishment of the provincial assemblies largely controlled the fate of the Qing dynasty in the end. Thus, the provincial gentry forged lateral ties of solidarity and group unity, and there emerged a rivalry between them and the provincial governors, the local officials.²² This schematic opposition between officials and gentry was most apparent in the Sichuan Provincial Assembly.

In Sichuan, Pu Dianjun (1875–1935), a *jinshi* who had studied in Japan, was

elected head of his provincial assembly. On the day the assembly met for the first time, Zhao Erxun (1844–1927), the governor-general of Sichuan who was in attendance in the assembly hall as a representative of the officialdom, referred to the aforementioned edict on constitutional preparation during his official speech. He issued a six-point “warning” to the assembled delegates, which included “planning for public prosperity . . . which would clarify the powers . . . to dissolve the borders.” The expression “dissolve the borders” was based on the edict of August 10, 1907, in which the various offices of government were instructed to consult on methods of “eliminating boundaries between Han and Manchu” and report back to the throne. How to do away with the ethnic conflict between Han and Manchu, which was becoming starker ever since the Boxer Rebellion, was a major political issue in the implementation of a constitution. “Clarifying powers” was, of course, an expression calling for the elucidation of powers between officials and gentry which constituted public authority. In fact, the term appeared in the first paragraph of the edict on constitutional preparation; the expression “supreme power is controlled by the court” follows from it. In other words, the “supreme power” of state control was in the hands of the court and the officialdom and they entrusted to the hands of the provincial gentry and populace local public affairs and other “various matters of government”—this was the guide by which the Qing set out. Zhao Erxun amplified his points: “All powers belong to the state,” and the power of the provincial assemblies would be narrowly confined to the “power to petition.” With these words he was trying to coerce the provincial gentry elite who were aroused with the opening of their provincial assemblies. As for Zhao Erxun, who represented bureaucratic authority, it was necessary at the very start to check the activities of the provincial assemblies which were destined to confront bureaucratic authority on the grounds of the stipulations within “clarifying the powers.”²³

Needless to say, delegates to the provincial assembly vigorously opposed Zhao’s speech, smacking as it did of running counter to the entire spirit of constitutionalism. Representing the “gentry and populace of Sichuan,” Pu Dianjun, head of the assembly, rose to greet the assembled delegates. He too quoted from the edict on constitutional preparation and offered an interpretation diametrically opposed to that of Zhao Erxun. Pu argued that the convening of the provincial assembly was the first step toward “governance by public opinion. . . . The day the National Assembly is formed will be the day that governance by public opinion is realized.” Thus, by appealing to the “public opinion” (*gonglun*) and “popular sentiment” (*mingqing*) of the provincial gentry of Sichuan, he called for an expansion of gentry and popular participation in government on the basis of “having the various matters of government” mentioned in the edict “handled publicly.” For the provincial gentry active in the assembly, the edict on constitutional preparation doubtless now became an irreplaceable imperial standard. In the rising railway protection movement, which began above all with the government’s policy of nationalizing the railways, the term “governance by pub-

lic opinion" was raised as the fitting slogan for the movement. As one example, in the year 1911 the Railway Protection Group, which formed around Pu Dianjun and other influential members of the provincial assembly, developed its movement on a province-wide scale in vehement opposition to the authorities. During street speeches, however, dual posters were hung on either side of a placard to the late Guangxu Emperor, reading "railways should be privately operated" and "various matters of governance should be handled by public opinion."²⁴ The symbolic linkage between the Guangxu Emperor who had suffered as a result of the 1898 Reform Movement and the slogan of "governance by public opinion" fascinatingly projects the nature of the late Qing constitutionalist movement.

There were differences as well in the degree to which this opposition between official power and gentry power emerged on the stage of the provincial assembly. In Hunan a provincial assembly was also convened on October 14, but following the speech by Governor Cen Chunxuan (1861–1933), assembly leader Tan Yankai (1880–1930) offered a "rebuttal." In it he argued that the "people of Hunan" understood the opening of the provincial assembly "as the beginning of their participation in government," and thus he cited the phrase that the "various matters of governance should be handled by public opinion" and called for officialdom and gentry to "use *gong* to be rid of *si*." The term *gong* as he used it meant concretely the "public opinion" of the Hunanese gentry, and the provincial assembly was regarded as the site which reflected and concentrated "public opinion" in contrast to the governor who represented bureaucratic power.²⁵

In both the cases of the Sichuan and the Hunan Provincial Assemblies, the interests of the local elite were expressed to the powers of the officialdom with respect to the proper sovereign-subject relations through "public opinion" (*yulun*, *gonglun*), as seen in the edict on constitutional preparation. In the edict of 1907 which called for the establishment of provincial assemblies and a National Assembly, expressions such as "making decisions on the basis of public opinion" and "selecting from public opinion" frequently appeared. Thus, the constitutionalists who came together in the provincial assemblies had reason to feel increasingly encouraged.

With the opening of the Political Advisory Board on October 3, 1910 (Xuantong 2), the opposition between official and gentry interests which erupted with the convening of the provincial assemblies moved the stage to the central authorities. The Political Advisory Board was the advisory organ established at the center as a kind of kernel for the preparatory constitution. As stipulated by the "Regulations of the Political Advisory Board," the Political Advisory Board and the provincial assemblies effectively had a mother-children relationship; cases in which the provincial assembly issued a protest to the governor of its province would be forwarded to the Political Advisory Board for reexamination. Furthermore, in cases in which the items decided upon by the Political Advisory Board conflicted with the preexisting administrative organs of the Grand Council

or various provincial offices, both sides memorialized their views and an “imperial adjudication” (*shengcai*) was decided upon according to the “Regulations of the Political Advisory Board.”

However, how were cases actually handled? The first case taken up was the problem of Hunan’s local public bonds: when Hunan Governor Yang Wending issued local public bonds without the administrative consent of the provincial assembly, Tan Yankai, head of the assembly, appealed to the Political Advisory Board to remove the authority of the local official. The court attempted to handle the matter of the memorial of protest from the Political Advisory Board with the expression, “procedural error” (*shulou*).²⁶ This was probably an unexpected turn of events for the members of the Political Advisory Board, too, who were looking forward to the furtherance of the preparatory constitution. Sharply critical voices were raised against the government (the Grand Council) first by the popularly elected delegates (they were simultaneously members of their respective provincial assemblies). On December 18, two months following the convening of the Political Advisory Board, it approved a motion censuring the grand councillors for “failure to bear responsibility” and “ignoring the public good and serving private ends,” and a full-fledged confrontation between bureaucratic and gentry authority was in the offing. The constitutionalists active in the various provincial assemblies formed the Federation of Provincial Assemblies on a national scale at the same time as the Political Advisory Board was due to convene; its chairman was Tang Hualong (1874–1918), head of the Hubei Provincial Assembly, and its vice-chairman was Pu Dianjun, head of the Sichuan Provincial Assembly. They sent to the capital a group of representatives and began developing the parliamentary petition movement on a large scale.

At the base of the dynastic system, which although in a state of demise was barely holding on during its last days, the subtle balance between gentry power, which was expanding with the rise of the constitutionalist movement, and bureaucratic power, which was trying to introduce constitutionalism to the inner workings of the existing power mechanism, was growing ever more precarious with the establishment of the provincial assemblies and the Political Advisory Board. The decisive rupture came with the appearance of the Imperial Cabinet on April 10, 1911. Pressed hard by the powerful petition movement of the constitutionalists, the government declared in an edict on that day that it would abolish the Grand Council and institute a responsible cabinet system, and Prince Qing (Yikuang, 1836–1916) was named prime minister. After the death of the Empress Dowager, Prince Qing became the core of the Qing regime, and because of his negative stance toward the constitutionalists, popular opinion held him in disfavor. The cabinet had a total of thirteen members: eight Manchus, four Chinese, and one Mongol; and five of the Manchus were members of the imperial household. In the eyes of the constitutionalist elite, a responsible cabinet centered around the imperial household seemed without a doubt to be both a policy of deception trampling under foot the intent of the constitutional edict,

which had spoken of “dissolving the borders” (between Han and Manchu) and “clarifying powers,” and an outrage flying in the face of Pu Dianjun’s “governance by public opinion.” The constitutionalists who came together in the Federation of Provincial Assemblies immediately claimed that this imperial household cabinet did not accord with the rules for the constitutional monarchy and did injury to the constitutional aspirations of all citizens; they thus requested of the court that the cabinet be formed once again. The court, however, flatly rejected their demand, saying “appointments and dismissals of all officials fall within the supreme power of the sovereign.”

This was the final straw, as the tendency of the constitutionalists to secede or disengage from the Qing government gained speed. This development meant that the local elite had unilaterally abandoned its role as intermediary between local society and state power which it supported. This may have had little meaning for the anti-Manchu revolutionaries, and the constitutionalists, fearful more than anything else of the entire country being thrown into chaos and still entertaining some small amount of the hope that the court would reform itself, rebutted that the court’s rejection of their request clearly spelled the loss of popular support (the mandate of heaven). The Sichuan railway protection movement, as is well known, became the fuse, and with the signal of the Wuchang Uprising of the New Armies, one province after the next declared its independence from the Qing dynasty. Over 260 years of Qing rule came to an end.

Conclusion: Central Power and Civil Society

Among the multiplicity of activities in which the local gentry was involved in the early twentieth century, a number of attempts were made at modern local autonomy by enlightened gentry-merchants in the cities of the lower Yangzi delta where there had been early contact with Europeans. The history of the Shanghai City Council, established in 1905, is well known. This body emerged as an agency for joint management of water utilization, but soon thereafter it was renamed the Shanghai City Council, and then again during the period of Shanghai’s independence in 1911 it was reorganized as the municipal government office. In the decade surrounding the 1911 Revolution, it played a major role as the actual mechanism for Shanghai’s self-government. This may be seen as a representative case in which the local elite, who were concerned with local affairs as described above, spontaneously gave form to local self-rule when turbulence struck the political order at the end of the Qing and into the early Republican period.

Another case worthy of attention is that of the Suzhou Citizens’ Association (Suzhou shimin gongshe), which was recently uncovered and introduced by Zhang Kaiyuan.²⁷ It was a self-governing organization of Suzhou merchants which existed over a long period of time, from 1909 through 1928. The Suzhou Citizen’s Association was a collective name for a number of self-governing

bodies—said to have reached twenty-seven such groups at its peak—organized along every road and waterway, and it was not necessarily the case that they had an organization or regulations that unified the entire group. At its core was the Guanqian Thoroughfare Citizens' Association, situated at the center of the city. In one of the recently unearthed archival documents of the Suzhou Citizens' Association—entitled “Sucheng Guanqian dajie shimin gongshe jianzhang” (Abbreviated regulations of the Guanqian Thoroughfare Citizens' Association of Suzhou)—the object of its founding is described: “This association unifies various bodies for mutual protection and handles only matters of the shared prosperity in this area.”²⁸ According to Zhu Ying, who has studied this archival material closely, the expression rendered here as “shared prosperity” (*gongyi*) referred primarily to hygiene and public safety (especially, fire prevention). Perhaps it was an organization like the federations of stores and shops we see today. The majority of its members were middle-sized and wealthy merchants with social influence, and they carried out the peripheral affairs of municipal government more or less independently. As in the case of the *gongju*, mentioned above, wherein the village local elite was entrusted by the public authorities with “local public affairs,” so too the rising urban commercial elite was increasing its participation in administrative authority as we enter the twentieth century.

According to the “Cheng zhen xiang difang zizhi zhangcheng” (Regulations on local self-government in at the sub-county level), which was promulgated as part of the constitutional preparation in 1907, “local self-government was to handle only matters of local prosperity and was primarily to assist in bureaucratic control.”²⁹ In everything the local self-government movement was to receive direction and guidance from the local officials. Clearly, “local self-government” was a campaign under the leadership of “bureaucratic control,” and there is no reason to see the local self-government movement at the end of the Qing as anything but a policy for the continued existence of the Qing control structure.

What transpired in the case of the Suzhou Citizens' Association? From extant archival materials, we can see that it looked up to the General Assembly for Commercial Affairs of the city (founded in 1905) as its leadership agency and negotiated with the local authorities through the general assembly only when necessary. This does not necessarily mean that they willingly followed the orders of the bureaucratically controlled “Self-Government Management Office” (established in 1909). There are detailed stipulations laid out in the rules and regulations of the Guanqian Association concerning election procedures and the division of duties of the personnel from the general secretary on down, but insofar as can be seen from its organizational form and operations, the Citizens' Association certainly had the qualities of self-government deserving the appellation of a civic body. A June 1910 text entitled “Guanqian dajie shimin gongshe yuanqi” (History of the Guanqian Thoroughfare Citizens' Association) reveals that great hopes were held for organizing these public associations as “com-

pletely self-governing bodies" and then making them the "starting point for an independent society." In fact, in the Republican period the scope of citizens' associations went beyond hygiene and public order to include a variety of functions, such as financial credit, taxation, commodity prices, and military stores. In short, in the mobile political situation that characterized early twentieth-century China, mutual associations of urban merchants took advantage of the opportunities of the reforms in the late Qing and the establishment of the republic to develop toward the higher order of self-governing merchant bodies, the citizens' association.

There is no need to point out that the independent activities of such urban merchants were an exceptional phenomenon in locales with favorable geographic and economic conditions and that ultimately we cannot generalize the extent of the spread of local self-government at the time on this basis. Given the composition of the opposition between officials and gentry, differing viewpoints may be offered on the complex social structure and class relations during this period. We need a concrete examination of the personal internal workings of the merchant elite and its relations to bureaucratic power. The most important issue here may be how we are to evaluate the capacity for self-government that the citizens' associations bore. Irrespective of the ideal of being "completely self-governing bodies" as they envisioned it, the managers of these associations had to work diligently to reconcile their relations with "bureaucratic control." We thus must not forget that the scope of "self-government" did not, in the final analysis, extend to the core of the urban administration. Although they called themselves "citizens" (*shimin*) and "associations" (*gongshe* [the contemporary word for "communes"]), in fact they cannot be compared to the tradition of urban self-government in Europe.

Despite all these limitations, however, the independent tendency of the merchant elite (gentry-merchants), whose effective power was on the rise in local society backed up by their considerable economic strength, as the case of the Suzhou Citizens' Association demonstrates, was bringing about a certain decisive transformation in relations between state and society at the time. In recent years a debate has flourished, using the approach of European history, to look once again at the expansion of gentry power and see it as the internal development leading to the formation of a "public sphere" and to "civil society."³⁰ If we may rely on their names, then the cases of such groups as the Suzhou Citizen's Association may indeed offer us instances of the sprouts of "civil society" in modern China. Arguments of this sort press us for a historical reevaluation against the theses put forward by Max Weber and those who have followed him in seeing no urban autonomy throughout Chinese history. In the final analysis, though, sprouts are no more than sprouts. We face the danger here of forming a judgment about Chinese history and society on the basis of a European category, for we will have to immediately conclude that these "sprouts," be they of the "public sphere" or "civil society," were almost immediately cut off. Thereafter,

in the process of numerous revolutions and civil disturbances, why “modern civil society” did not ultimately mature in China brings the problem back to where it started. In any event, a major topic for research that remains with us is how we are to understand the nature of the self-governing, profitable bodies—such as merchant associations, educational associations, peasant associations (known as *fatuan* in the Republican period)—of the urban elite that cropped up in large numbers at this time.

Finally, let us look at this issue from another perspective; namely, let us consider the relationship between state power and the local elite discussed thus far by following the broader textual lines in Chinese history. Perhaps this can be directly understood as a variation of opposition and competition from the previous era between those who wished to strengthen central power (in support of the *junxian* argument) and those who stressed civil influence (in support of the *fengjian* argument).³¹ The popularity of the *fengjian* thesis in the late Qing reflected the fact that the various forces of “civil society” which continued toward independence sought a certain political participation of the central public authority. The group of issues which appeared here—center vs. localities, power vs. autonomy, and bureaucracy vs. gentry and merchants—are certainly worth further study, but as touched on earlier, what became key at this juncture was the problem of how the realities of power and authority in local society changed in relation to “public opinion.” As Kishimoto Mio has shown concerning the local gentry in the Ming and Qing periods, the controversy between *junxian* and *fengjian* “was argued as a question of the relative superiority or inferiority of means: which of the two was more efficacious in maintaining social tranquillity.” The picture of local power supporting exclusively private privilege coming into serious conflict with state power attempting to infiltrate the furthest extremities of social life cannot necessarily be established. In other words, the relationship between state and society in Chinese history is apt to be understood as a zero-sum-game of repeated alternations between ups and downs of the two sides.

It is suggestive in this sense that intellectuals who were actively trying to introduce local self-government into modern China were without exception also advocates of actively strengthening central power. We should remember that Sun Zhongshan, Jiang Jieshi, and Mao Zedong all rose to political prominence in the Republican period, and while they recognized in principle local sharing of power and popular self-government, they always gave preference to strengthening the unified power of the center over the rights and freedoms of urbanites. This is attested to by the firmly rooted tradition of China’s political culture, which took “social tranquillity and a harmonious existence for the myriad people” as the most important concern. Indeed, China of the Cultural Revolution years had power and authority monolithically concentrated as never before on the basis of Mao Zedong’s charismatic control; it presented the ultimate stage of a society of “public opinion” into which such ethical tenets as “*dagong wusi*” and “*posi ligong*” (destroy the self and create the public) permeated without the slightest

crack. Furthermore, the slogan of the “dispersal of power downwards” and the subsequent appearance of a “decentralized economy,”³² both in the Deng Xiaoping era, are more than anything else proof of the fact that the dynamism of opposition and competition between central power and civil influence still deeply holds control over politics and society in contemporary China.

As we look back over it, twentieth-century China has taken as its major objective the establishment of a strong and unwaveringly consistent state. Over this period of time, the holders of power have changed hands several times, from the Qing dynasty to the Guomindang to the Chinese Communists, but there has been no change in the efforts of the central powerholders to draw up a “plan” (*tu*) for the dream of a rich country and strong military vis-à-vis the “land” (*di*) where independent civil society would exist. This was true of Sun Zhongshan, Mao Zedong, and Deng Xiaoping as well. The reform policies of opening China up that are now pressing forward are steadily breaking down the bases of the old institutions of state socialism in the sense that they arouse the independent and spontaneous aspects of society toward the state. The issue to be resolved will be how to reconcile and convert the relationship between *tu* and *di* under an extremely sturdy system of centralized power. In short, the awareness that the state could never become rich and strong without independent and spontaneous qualities of the society from below support the present line of “modernization” in China. As for what sorts of results this policy will eventuate, the future trend toward reform and opening up is not at all clear. By the same token, though, there is no doubt that the political power that will henceforth control the changes in China will emerge from the autonomous space of society which although limited has been recently cleared. The work of historically clarifying up the relationship between state and society upon which will develop the long-term trend toward China’s modernization is indispensable.

Notes

This essay originally appeared as “Ōchō kokka shakai, kindai Chūgoku no baai,” in *Ajia kara kangaeru* (Considerations from Asia), vol. 4: *Shakai to kokka* (Society and the state), ed. Mizoguchi Yūzō, Hamashita Takeshi, Hiraishi Naoaki, and Miyajima Hiroshi (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1994), pp. 37–68. Translated by Joshua A. Fogel. All notes are the author’s unless otherwise noted.

1. “Jingshi Baoguohui diyiji yanshuo” (First collection of speeches of the Baoguohui in the capital), in Tang Zhijun, ed., *Kang Youwei zhenglun ji* (Essays by Kang Youwei on government) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), vol. 1, p. 237.

2. Wenti, “Yan can Kang Youwei zhegao” (Seriously examine Kang Youwei’s draft memorial), *Yijiao congbian* 2.

3. He Xiu, *Chunqiu Gongyang jiegu* (Explication of the Gongyang commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals), “Yingong 1.”

4. Satō Shin’ichi, “‘Bunmei’ to ‘Bankoku kōhō’: Kindai Chūgoku ni okeru kokusai hō juyō no ichi sokumen” (“Civilization” and “international law”: One aspect of the acceptance of international law in modern China), in Sogawa Takeo, *Kokusai seiji shisō to*

taigai ishiki (The ideology of international politics and consciousness of the outside world) (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1977), pp. 183–300.

5. The foregoing is based primarily on Banno Masataka, *Kindai Chūgoku seiji gaikōshi* (A history of modern Chinese politics and diplomacy) (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1973), p. 293.

6. Shigeki Toshio, “Ri Kōshō no zokkoku shihai kan” (Li Hongzhang’s view of controlling subordinate states), *Chūgoku, shakai to bunka* 2 (1987), pp. 89–116.

7. In *Yinbingshi wenji* (Collected essays from an Ice-Drinker’s Studio) (Beijing reprint: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), vol. 4, pp. 56–60.

8. Respectively, in *Yinbingshi wenji*, vol. 5, pp. 15–17, and *Yinbingshi zhuanji* (Collected works from an Ice-Drinker’s Studio) (Beijing reprint: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), vol. 5, p. 16.

9. “Xianzheng pianchaguan zizhengyuan huizou xianfa dagang ji yiyuanfa xuanjufa yaoling ji zhunian choubei shiyi zhe” (Joint memorial of the Constitutional Editorial Committee and the Political Advisory Board on the summaries of the parliamentary and electoral law in the principles of the constitution and matters concerning the yearly preparation thereof) (dated Guangxu 34 [1908], 8th month, 1st day), in *Gugong bowuyuan Ming-Qing dang'an bu* (Ming-Qing Archives Department of the Palace Museum), ed., *Qingmo choubei lixian dang'an shiliao* (Archival materials on constitutional preparations in the late Qing) (Beijing: Zhonghua 1979), vol. 1, p. 56.

10. Marianne Bastid, “Official Conceptions of Imperial Authority at the End of the Qing Dynasty,” in *Foundations and Limits of State Power in China*, ed. Stuart S. Schram (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1987), pp. 147–85.

11. Shiba Yoshinobu, “Shakai to keizai no kankyo” (Society and the economic environment), in *Minzoku no sekai shi* (The world history of ethnic groups), vol. 5, *Kan minzoku to Chūgoku shakai* (The Han ethnicity and Chinese society), ed. Hashimoto Mantarō (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1983), pp. 182–86.

12. Ōtani Toshio, “Kōnan no suiri to kyōtōsei” (Water utilization and the xiangdong system in Jiangnan), in his *Shindai seiji shisō shi kenkyū* (Studies in the history of political thought in the Qing period) (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1991), pp. 238–39.

13. William T. Rowe, *Hankow: Commerce and Society in a Chinese City, 1796–1889* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984).

14. Yamada Masaru, “‘Shinryō’ kō: Shindai Shisen no chiiki eriito” (A Study of the *Shenliang*: The Sichuan local elite in the Qing period), *Tōyō shi kenkyū* 50.2 (August 1991), pp. 58–82.

15. Ōtani Toshio, “Nen Kōgyō danzai jiken no seijiteki hakei” (The political background to the criminal case against Nian Gengyao), in his *Shindai seiji shisō shi kenkyū*, p. 189.

16. Mary B. Rankin, *Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China: Zhejiang Province, 1865–1911* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986).

17. In Liang, *Yinbingshi wenji*, vol. 3, p. 43.

18. In Zhongguo shixuehui, ed., *Zhongguo jindai ziliao congkan, Wuxu bianfa* (Collection of materials on modern China, the 1898 Reform Movement) (Shanghai: Shenzhou guoguangshe, 1953), vol. 4, pp. 423–25.

19. In Xia Dongyuan, ed., *Zheng Guanying ji* (Writings of Zheng Guanying) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1982), vol. 1, p. 318.

20. He Qi and Hu Liyuan, “Zeng lun shuhou” (Afterward to the views of Zeng [Jize], 1887), in *Xinzheng zhenquan* (True explanation of the new reforms) (Shanghai: Gezhi xinbaoguan, 1901), p. 3.

21. In *Qingmo choubei lixian dang'an shiliao*, vol. 1, p. 441.

22. Zhang Pengyuan, *Lixianpai yu Xinhai geming* (The Constitutionalists and the

1911 Revolution) (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1969), pp. 63–104.

23. In Zhao Yingtao, ed., *Sichuan jindai shi gao* (Draft history of modern Sichuan) (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1990), p. 441.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

25. Sōda Saburō, “Shingai kakumei no shokaikaku to Konan” (Hunan and the reforms of the 1911 Revolution), in Yokoyama Suguru, ed., *Chūgoku no kindaika to chihō seiji* (Modernization and local politics in China) (Tokyo: Keisō shobō, 1985), pp. 70–71.

26. Zhang Pengyuan, *Lixianpai yu Xinhai geming*, chapter 4; Guo Moruo, “Shingai kakumei zengo” (Around the time of the 1911 Revolution), in Ono Shinobu and Maruyama Noboru, trans., *Kaku Matsujaku jiden 1: Watakushi no yōshōnen jidai* (The autobiography of Guo Moruo, 1: My youth) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1966), p. 225.

27. On the Suzhou Citizens’ Association, see *Suzhou shi dang’anguan*, ed., “Suzhou shimin gongshe dang’an xuANJI” (Selections from the archival materials on the Suzhou Citizens’ Association) and Zhang Kaiyuan and Ye Wanzhong, “Suzhou shimin gongshe yu Xinhai geming” (The Suzhou Citizens’ Association and the 1911 Revolution), both in *Xinhai geming shi congkan* (Series on the history of the 1911 Revolution), vol. 4 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982). Also, see chapter 5 of Zhu Ying, *Xinhai geming shiqi xinshi shangren shetuan yanjiu* (Studies on the associations of new-style merchants in the period of the 1911 Revolution) (Beijing: Renmin daxue chubanshe, 1991).

28. In *Xinhai geming shi congkan*, vol. 4, pp. 60–62.

29. In *Qingmo choubei lixian dang'an shiliao*, vol. 2, p. 728.

30. An essay that introduces the developments in the theory of “civil society” in modern Chinese history in recent years in the United States is: William T. Rowe, “The Public Sphere in Modern China,” *Modern China* 16.3 (July 1990), pp. 309–29. For an essay that examines the same theme with a critical edge, see Kong Fuli (Philip A. Kuhn), “Gongmin shehui yu tizhi de fazhan” (Civil society and institutional developments), *Jindai Zhongguo shi yanjiu tongxun* 13 (March 1992), pp. 77–84.

31. Kishimoto Mio, “Min Shin jidai no kyōshin” (The local gentry from the Ming and Qing eras), in *Ken’i to kenryoku* (Authority and Power), vol. 7, in *Shirazu sekai shi e no toi* (Series, inquiries into world history) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1990), pp. 41–66.

32. The two Chinese expressions cited here require a bit of elucidation. The first, *quanxian xiafang* (translated as the “dispersal of power downwards”), puns on the term *xiafang* or “sent down,” which referred to the many Chinese who were sent to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution (and earlier) for reeducation. The second, *zhuhou jingji* (translated as “decentralized economy”), actually refers to the economy of the *zhuhou* or feudal lords of the Zhou era of high antiquity; implied is the notion that the localities are getting richer than the center which depends on them. —Trans.

From Civil Society to Party Government: Models of the Citizen's Role in the Late Qing

Don C. Price

Two fairly standard features of a liberal political order are a realm of public activity, including organized nonpolitical activity, not dominated by the state (in effect, civil society), and regular and open political competition (in effect, competition between political parties). There are questions about China's hospitality to a liberal order on both counts. The quest for collective strength and the assumption that political participation means harmony, not strife, are said to have left no room for political competition, while vigorous traditions of statist leadership are supposed to have narrowed the possibilities for independent citizen initiative.¹

The present essay examines Chinese views on both of these issues among reformers and revolutionaries at the end of the Qing dynasty. This was an era in which many thinkers whose basic attitudes were formed in very traditional environments were suddenly confronted with the opportunity, and perhaps urgent necessity, to adopt some new and foreign principles and practices in the realm of social and political organization. As many students of this period have argued, the major impetus for most innovations was the threat to national survival and the importance of national strengthening. And while political participation was supposed to have catalyzed popular patriotic energies in the West, the element of disorder it entailed was not appreciated and would not be tolerated. The intellectual fluidity of this period and the conflicting impulses swirling around the issues of participation and national strength suggest that it will be instructive to examine the various forms of citizen involvement contemplated then. Was the value

of civil society ignored in the preoccupation with statist solidarity? Was the vital element of struggle in political competition ignored in the expectation that democracy must bring strength? What do Chinese attitudes tell us about the possibilities of a liberal order in modern China?

Chinese exposure to images of Western society around the turn of the century stimulated an intense interest in the question of the proper relation of citizen/subject to state, and the scope of proper autonomous individual or group activity on behalf of the nation. The most radical challenge, perhaps, was posed by Yan Fu, who argued that the anti-individualistic values imposed on Chinese under her imperial order had destroyed their strength and creativity individually, and robbed the country of its potential for power, prosperity and progress.² His message was taken up, modified, and further popularized by Liang Qichao as he developed his concept of the "new citizen."³ Influential as Yan was, it is likely that his argument in favor of a wider legitimate scope for the pursuit of individual interest was less representative of reform and revolutionary attitudes than the scenario he presented of a Darwinian international jungle, in which nations were the significant competitors and successful adaptation to the struggle spelled the difference between survival and extinction. While there were those who argued that other dynamics governed the fate of nations in the modern world, the model of the international jungle was one with which all had to contend.⁴

But if the pursuit of the country's survival did not necessarily focus public attention on the necessity for greater individual liberty, it did reinforce wide interest in another facet of modern Western society which seemed to offer a key to the realization of the people's potential as a source of national wealth and power. In fact, to judge from the early reform periodicals, the impact of Yan Fu's social Darwinism, together with other as yet unidentified sources of information about the West, was far less to direct attention to the development of the potential of the *individual* (even in the service of the state) than to arouse intense excitement about the potential of all manner of *nonstate, collective* private activity, together with the periodical press, contributing to the public and national good. But such forms of cooperation and communication were not admired simply as instruments of national strengthening. Indeed, the ancient Chinese idea of *qun* (association, grouping), now revived to explain the Western phenomenon, served not only as a principle justifying loyalty and individual subordination to the unit of Darwinian struggle, presumably the nation.⁵ It was also a principle explaining people's ability to organize and cooperate in the pursuit of collective goals in subnational and supranational units, and its benefits did not necessarily issue from competition. Still, the national welfare and national survival were the most urgently appreciated benefits to be gained from *qun* in its modern Western form.

The general subject was broached with a focus on the press in 1896 in Liang Qichao's first lead editorial in the first major reform journal, the *Shiwu bao*. The Western press, according to Liang, promoted communication (*tong*) as opposed

to obstruction (*sai*). It kept rulers and people in touch. It also kept the whole population informed about everything, and thus enlightened them. There were journals for women and children. There were journals addressed to every field of knowledge (*you yi xue ji you yi bao*). They reported debates in parliament, the national budget, demographic statistics, geography, business news, scholarly curricula, commodity production, foreign developments, military strengths, changes in the laws, scientific advances, and technological innovations. The press grew hand in hand with the elevation of popular enlightenment, and so did the strength of the nation. This, he concluded, was all the result of *tong*.⁶

A few months later, no doubt under the influence of Yan Fu's writings, Liang turned his attention from communication to association.⁷ He paired *qun* (the principle of association) with *tong*, and *du* (solitary isolation) with *sai*. Europeans, he said, had a keen understanding of *qun*, implementing it politically in parliaments, commercially in corporations (*gongsi*), and among the educated elite in *xuehui*—societies for the promotion and dissemination of knowledge. The sophistication of the first two depended on the work of the third, which he called their “mother.” “Schools,” he wrote, “are promoted from above, while *xuehui* are created from below.” Then he turned to the number and diversity of the *xuehui*. “There is a society for every field of learning,” he wrote. “*You yi xue ji you yi hui*.” There were societies devoted to agricultural science, mining, commerce, industry, law, astronomy, geology, mathematics, chemistry, electricity, acoustics, optics, statics, dynamics, hydraulics, thermodynamics, medicine, zoology, botany, pedagogy, photography, and even such trivia as painting and bathhouses. Their members included royalty and humble commoners, with membership numbering in the hundreds and thousands, endowments totaling millions, libraries, experimental equipment, and journals to report their latest advances. “Hence, no field of learning is without its achievements, no technique without its refinements, and innovations arise daily to be employed by the people. Human resources are daily increased to provide leadership for these nations; hence their wealth and power is foremost in the five continents, and their civilization surpasses that of the Three Dynasties.”⁸ The function of spontaneous diversity is worth remarking here, in light of other passages where Liang emphasized the unity of the national community generated by these societies: “There are rulers, officials, students, farmers, laborers, merchants and soldiers, but they have ten thousand eyes with one focus, ten thousand ears with one hearing, ten thousand hands and feet, with a single heart and a united strength . . . when minds are joined and vying powers honed, cog to cog, strand to strand, converging along many paths, this is what is called a nation.”⁹ Even here, it is worth noting, an organic unity emerges from below as the natural result of free association and open channels of communication, rather than being created by the organs of the state.

Writing in 1896, and optimistic about the prospects for reform, Liang looked for precedents to build on. Other institutions had kept rulers and people in touch

in ancient China, and more recently, the semi-official gazetteers (*dibao*) had arisen before newspapers in the West, but they had not developed. As for *xuehui*, they had originated not in the West, but in China, where their roots were recorded in the *Changes* and the *Analects*. In fact, it was thanks to groups of scholars, right down to the Donglin in the Ming, that China owed the preservation of her culture. The Qing hiatus in this tradition he diplomatically blamed not on the Manchus but on the Han school, which concentrated purely on writing books and eschewed public discussion, servilely accepting the view that groups (*hui*) were seditious.¹⁰ Thus, the autonomy of the elites and the weight of the state were at issue, but Liang chose to accentuate the positive potential in China's tradition.

Tang Caichang found less encouragement in China's history. He, too, related public associations to the principle of *qun*, and via *qun*, to *gongli*, a term which as he used it meant the principle of the common or public interest, or communal equity, which he found manifested in various historical advances around the globe since ancient times, but particularly missing in China since the Qin tyranny. Developments in the modern world, by contrast, suggested to Tang an irresistible progress toward a utopia of the common weal. One evidence of this was the evolution of *guohui* and *yiyuan*, developed best in America, which provided an environment in which countless public associations (*minhui*) could flourish. Tang's enthusiastic catalogue is reminiscent of Liang's: men's societies, women's societies, children's societies, literary, ethical, charitable, temperance, orphanage societies, insane asylums, societies for reforming criminals and preventing vice, insurance societies, disarmament societies, as well as all manner of scientific, geographical, craft, and commercial societies. Turning immediately to organized resistance, liberation movements, or republican institutions, Tang spoke of the Greeks organized against the Ottomans and the Spanish and Portuguese against Napoleon and monarchists. Most of the strong countries of the world owed their strength to their parliaments, while Russia, Poland [sic], Turkey, and Persia represented exceptions, where oppressive state power provoked the organization of large and dangerous secret societies (*si jie huidang*) which incited the people.

After discussing the utopian promise in activities of supranational organs like disarmament meetings and tariff unions,¹¹ and the ethical progress of religions, Tang moved on to politics within constitutional governments. There, he found the views of competing parties circulated by newspapers like blood circulating in the body, enabling conscious action throughout the organism, preventing obstruction and paralysis. Parties proclaimed their programs openly, awaiting the majority's decision. Private or public, the purposes were pursued by parties. This he contrasted to China, where from the Han to the Ming (!) both parties and private interests (*si*) had been tabooed, with the result that both were corrupted, and the bad drove out the good.¹²

That Western voluntary associations were discussed in the context of such

cosmic processes as *qun*, and the inexorable advance of the principle of the common interest is an indicator of the importance attached to them, and helps explain the excitement they aroused.¹³ Their rise in the world amounted to nothing less than a major historical advance not only in man's capacity for intellectual achievement and material progress but also for his self-realization as a social being.

Aside from these fundamental perspectives, the capacity for voluntary association was a matter of urgent importance because of the contribution of public associations to national strength. Liang Qichao, misunderstanding the British East India Company (unwitting testimony to the gap between Chinese images and Western realities at this time), asserted that England's conquest of India and China's loss of Hong Kong were due to the activities of England's *Shangxue hui* (!), and observed that the Europeans' constant surveying of inland China's resources, widely regarded as a kind of spying, was simply the work of their geographical societies, but that for such services they were highly valued, honored, and rewarded by their governments.¹⁴ Elsewhere, organizations of English merchants variously named, but usually with the implication that they were not creatures or arms of the state, were often credited with the conquest of India.

Different, sometimes divergent points were made. In one article, Mai Menghua stressed English state support for its *shanghui*, and in another, the fact that such societies made the conquest of India possible because they undertook efforts which the state would not.¹⁵ In yet another article, Mai called for the establishment of large Chinese umbrella companies (*gongsí*) on the model of Japanese *gumi* so as to compete more effectively with their foreign rivals. To enlighten Chinese merchants as to the value of such an arrangement, a *shanghui*, with functions analogous to the Japanese *Shōhō kaigijo* and *Shōhō gakkō*, should be established. The state, he insisted, should *not* intervene.¹⁶ In many cases, state and private cooperation and joint funding were mentioned explicitly, as for example two memorials reprinted in the *Shiwu bao* proposing the establishment of schools, and an early article by Ou Jujia praising private initiative and support in cooperation with the state in countries where the people enjoy autonomy.¹⁷

In these and numerous other articles, associations organized and operated by citizens in a private capacity on the Western model were recommended as the key to national strength and successful international competition. Indeed, the Western models must to some extent have served as inspiration for much of the vigorous organizational activity undertaken in the early reform era. As those who are familiar with the pre-1898 movement are well aware, the pages of the reform press were full of announcements (and constitutions/bylaws) of new societies in China, many with their own journals, devoted to the general elevation of knowledge, to various fields of study, to the elimination of footbinding, and to the promotion of Chinese commerce and agriculture. Scarcely a single one fails to mention the new organization's benefits in terms of national wealth and power.

Much of the import and substance of the Chinese images of the West which

circulated in this era lay in the contrast drawn with China. In this connection it is interesting to note how little attention is paid in the reform press to traditional voluntary public organizations, aside from the ambiguous case of scholars' associations. One patriotic song pointed to the tradition of private philanthropy as a source for promoting modern education, while an inaugural statement for the Society for the Study of the Sages catalogued a wide variety of associations, including kinship associations and public philanthropies, as a largely defunct tradition to build on, but in essence this tradition was ignored.¹⁸

In dismissing the existing traditional associations, the writer for the Society for the Study of the Sages gives some indication of the criteria for real associations. "Petty men have associations," he wrote. "Gentlemen have none. There are banquet societies, but none for scholarly discussion. There are associations abroad, but none in China. There are associations for miscellaneous ghosts and spirits, but none for Confucius." These societies, in other words, were not constructive. The *huiguan*, natural units for alliance in a larger chamber of commerce, were criticized for wasting their resources on entertainments, instead of contributing to China's commerce.¹⁹ And Liang Qichao opened his discussion of *shanghui* by stressing China's capacity for spontaneous organization at the local level (e.g., *xiangshe*, in Kwangtung), but noted that in contrast to the West, local associations could not be linked in larger networks to serve the interests of a wider constituency. What was necessary in the case of self-governing *shanghui* was not a new creation, but a linking of existing self-governing units.²⁰

This process Liang called "gathering groups" (*hequn*), and he found China deficient in it. Incapable of building larger groups on the basis of its numerous smaller ones, China remained, as Liang put it (anticipating Sun Yat-sen) a "sheet of loose sand." Moreover, Chinese lacked the virtue and spirit of gathering groups. Not to speak of her conservatives, even her modernizers, setting up new organizations in neighboring areas, showed scorn and envy for each other. Further pursuing the differences between China and the West, he noted that in the "civilized countries" the people enjoyed all kinds of freedom (including free thought and free speech), and at the same time displayed self-restraint, obeying reason, the rules of their group, and the will of the majority. Freedom under self-restraint is crucial to grouping, he argued, and personal independence (or autonomy, *duli*) does not conflict with the principle of grouping, for the two are not opposites. Rather, Liang contended, the opposite of independence is dependency, and the opposite of grouping is pursuing selfish aims (*yingsi*).²¹

Elsewhere in the reform press the connection between personal independence (autonomy) and voluntary public associations is drawn still more tightly. Ou Jujia, writing in the fall of 1897, noted that in the West the state encouraged and supported but did not direct the work of useful voluntary associations (giving the examples of agricultural societies and commercial associations), thus contributing to the general progress and prosperity. In the process, the people's spirit (*minqi*) flourished and the people's powers/rights (*minquan*) became ever more

important. The implication is that the independently organized spontaneous energies of the people promote the general and national welfare and progress in ways that government mobilization cannot. Still, Ou seemed hopeful that the state might similarly support an independent civil society in China.²² A few months later he was less optimistic, not to say bitter. In an article entitled "How Reform in All the Countries of the World has Arisen from the People," he contrasted what he identified as the traditional Taoist policy of governing the people by stultifying them, on the one hand, with the enlightened European pattern, on the other. In China, discussion of national affairs was forbidden, understanding was obscured, and the people, their spirit eroded, lived as in a stupor. And yet he claimed that the responsibility lay with the people. A hundred years ago, he claimed, Europe was no different from China, and the change there was brought about not by their rulers' enlightenment but by the storming of the Bastille.²³

But the traditional state's monopolization of public concerns and suppression of public discussion and criticism were also held to account, and widely criticized in the reform press, by, for example, Zhang Binglin (who called for the institution of Huang Zongxi's school system) and Mai Menghua, who claimed that coercive paternalism had left China's people passively dependent on the government and deficient in organizational capacity.²⁴ Liang Qichao echoed Ou's view, declaring that the Chinese government in denying the freedom of association and discussion had destroyed their sense of civic responsibility and their vitality (*yuanqi*).²⁵

The view that China's traditional autocracy had prevented the development of a healthy sphere of spontaneous, organized public activity was taken to its most extreme conclusion in a pamphlet which Ou Jujia, now fairly converted to revolution, wrote in 1902. "There is not a single public society (*gong hui*)," he wrote, "but there are *si hui* throughout the land." In Ou's view, it was such secret societies that represented the Chinese people's genius for independent organization, and they were organized precisely in opposition to tyranny. China's scholars did not unite together (*bu xiang tuanje*) nor did her merchants, nor her farmers and artisans; and consequently, China, for all her huge size and population, was trampled under foot by foreigners. Only after her stifling autocracy had been eliminated, he argued, would there be a place for voluntary public associations in China.²⁶

To a certain extent, Ou's and others' disregard or dismissal of China's indigenous voluntary public associations resulted from a kind of deductive logic. China's rulers had monopolized the public sphere, crushed criticism and discussion, and effectively destroyed all popular sense of responsibility for public affairs. Therefore, whatever China had, they could not be true public associations. And yet this is not all. The criticisms in the reform press of the *huiguan* and the discussion of *hequn*, the grouping of groups, are eerily reminiscent of Fei Xiaotong's comparison of China's rural society with that of the modern West. Unlike the West, where society resembles bundles of straw which can be bun-

dled into bigger bundles, Chinese society is like circular ripples on the surface of water, spreading out from the individual. One can appeal to an individual to widen the circles, to broaden the scope of his concern (as in fact the reformers did, in trying to promote loyalty to and concern for the country), but it is difficult to establish rationally organized nonkinship societies.²⁷ Whatever its validity as regards Qing dynasty society at large, such a perception is no mere willful distortion. Whether by meta-grouping or not, the spectacle of perfect strangers, separated by great social and geographical distances, efficiently pooling their knowledge and resources to promote everything from temperance to advances in photography, simply struck Liang Qichao, Tang Caichang, and others as novel and exotic, greatly different from anything in the China they knew.

Aside from these considerations, the modern Western voluntary associations were inextricably linked to, and an indispensable instrument of, the dazzling progress which had so swiftly transformed the world and opened such breathtaking vistas onto the future (not to mention terrifying possibilities for laggards). Moreover, they were an unmistakable witness to, and an indispensable instrument of, popular *spirit*, as opposed to the servility and stupor of which the Chinese people now stood accused, and which seemed likely to doom the nation to partition and the race to extinction.²⁸

However exotic in practice and in effect the Western associations seemed, the reaction of China's progressives to them bears witness to a tradition and a spirit readily capable of appreciating the model they represented. Indeed, the model was itself in all likelihood a projection of certain Chinese ideals, newly recombed under the catalytic effect of the Western example. One was the ideal, increasingly influential during the Qing, of contribution to the peace and prosperity of *tianxia*, which the state alone was unable to insure, through energetic and totally voluntary promotion of clan organizations.²⁹ Another was the more ancient ideal of public concern as an obligation transcending kin-group or other particularistic interests. As a projection of Chinese ideals, however, this model would soon prove to be of limited use either in solving China's problems or in understanding the power of the West.

In a way, the fascination with organized activity in the Western public sphere mirrored the proliferation of study societies and journals in China's reform era. And it was perhaps because after the turn of the century the political press and political and nationalistic organizations proliferated so rapidly, outside the purview of the state, that the intense fascination with the West's voluntary associations seems to have been so brief. The problem of arousing and sustaining the people's *qi* remained, but after the era of the reform press (roughly 1896–1902), the question was no longer whether China had journals and societies, but which ones to read and write for, and which to join and work for. As time went on, even the lack of *qi* seemed less a problem than a government which stood in its way. Societies and journals had been established, but the post-1898 government had killed them. Students volunteered to fight in Manchuria, and the government

refused to send them. Citizens would try to finance railroads, and the government would decide to mortgage them to foreigners. The role of the government was a major issue. Moreover, the triumph of constitutional Japan over autocratic Russia suggested that a new kind of government was the answer to China's problems, and the Qing court's announcement in 1905 of its intention to adopt a constitution moved to the forefront of public debate the alternatives of reform or revolution, and the nature of constitutional government, whether under a monarchy or a republic.

Thus, where the earlier discourse had balanced an appreciation for modern, representative forms of government with arguments that the government's role was of necessity limited, that national vigor must derive largely from the non-governmental, spontaneous popular activism of citizens free to exercise to the fullest their organizational and cooperative talents, this point came to be neglected amid the preoccupation with transforming the government. Moreover, earlier doubts about the spontaneous organizational abilities of the Chinese voiced in discussions of the Western public sphere were only partly allayed by the conclusion that bad government was to blame, and thus, ironically, hopes were raised that the leadership of a future, better government might offset and remedy existing weaknesses in the national social and political character.

Much of this shift in thinking is reflected in major articles by Liang Qichao, the first of which, written in the spring of 1911, was entitled "Hopes for China's Future and the Citizens' Responsibility." Liang's argument was presented as a series of replies to a pessimistic interlocutor who feared that China was doomed, largely because of the inadequacies of her people. Like Ou Jujia, the interlocutor blamed China's people for her autocracy, but more than that, also for a lack of scientific achievement and a conservatism which prevented the adoption of useful foreign things, for lack of patriotism, lack of political ability, and above all, an obscene selfishness and particularism which rendered candidates for imperially bestowed honors and favors willing puppets of the autocracy, and the rest of the people simply unscrupulous scramblers after their own advantage.

Liang's response was to credit the Chinese with a strong capacity for nationhood (*guominxing*), and with a unique accomplishment in having preserved their political identity over a vast territory and population for several thousand years. Aside from their cohesiveness he claimed that they were the most self-reliant people on earth, except perhaps for the English and Americans, as witnessed, among other things, by the impressive tradition of China's private educational institutions. For the rest, he blamed the government for stifling the people's abilities and undermining their morale. "If our people cannot join forces, contrive to overthrow this bad government, and rebuild a good one, then whatever policies we adopt, whatever systems we institute, it will serve only to increase our problems and cause trouble for ourselves. But if we can really join efforts to overthrow this bad government and rebuild a good one, then we will cut through this Gordian knot." The responsibility of China's citizens, then, was first and

foremost to replace the existing government with a good one. If they failed to do this, they would be “abandoning their responsibility and hastening the nation’s demise.”³⁰

Having despaired of the present government, Liang now called on “the people” or “citizens” to rescue China. But as he presented his remedy, it became clear that most of the citizens would not be autonomous actors, nor was his proposal like his earlier rather wistful plea that Chinese somehow learn to group their groups spontaneously. In what was an essentially two-pronged approach to the problem, Liang wanted, first, to have an elite of dedicated volunteers devote themselves to replacing the present government; and second, to have the new government (under their leadership) play a key role in regenerating and mobilizing the people. Given the current apathy, selfishness, corruption, and hopelessness in China such volunteers would be a very small number. Such men must resist the temptation to yield to despair with the thought that they “have shouldered a task that most in the country are unwilling to take on, the reason being precisely that so few are willing to do it.” “Even the advances of today’s civilized countries,” he said, “are due to no more than a handful of leaders in the government and in the opposition. . . . The point is that it is only thanks to these dozen or so men that the majority can be induced to follow (*jingcong*) and the country be made to prosper.” Whenever such men default on their natural (*tianfu*) task, their country declines precipitously. “Therefore we must hold ourselves to a constant vow: ‘China’s survival depends entirely on me. If I consent to it, she will perish. If I do not, she will not. . . . I tremble day and night with the thought that if China should by some remote possibility perish, it will be my fault for not having fulfilled my responsibility.’”³¹

Much of Liang’s talk about the potential of China’s people was designed to reassure pessimists that China’s cultural legacy had equipped them well to perform their role as citizens of a modern nation state. But whatever their self-reliance and cohesiveness, these virtues could not make up for their lack of centralized guidance. Quite aside from the fact that China’s autocracy (the product of geographical accident rather than inadequate national character) had left the people’s abilities somewhat paralyzed and in at least temporary need of restorative therapy, the activities of even a healthy citizenry in a modern nation required the capable guidance and coordination of the state in order to realize their potential. From this perspective, the academies, which Liang had cited as evidence of the people’s ability to provide for their own needs without relying on the government, also represented for him the drawbacks of that government’s *laissez-faire* tradition. China’s comparatively poor showing in scientific accomplishment was due precisely to the fact that national universities in the West concentrated and coordinated research, whereas China’s decentralized private institutions did not pool knowledge, disseminate discoveries and promote collective, cumulative advances on a nationwide scale.³²

In this article, Liang did not challenge his interlocutor’s point that much of the

success of the modern powers had resulted from interventionist state policies. A year later, he argued strongly for an interventionist or, to use his preferred term, “nurturing” (*baoyu*) state in China. China’s citizens, he stated, were still at an “immature (*youzhi*) level.” “It is a plain and undeniable fact that in terms of political and economic arrangements they can hardly act for themselves, or dispense with the state’s guidance.” But the experience of the past century even in England and America showed how the people’s self-government and the state’s nurturing advance together. Moreover, whether domestically or internationally, a number of matters must now be handled by the state: tariff protection, encouragement of certain kinds of production, unification of currency and coordination of the mints, promotion of technological advances, expansion of transportation and communications infrastructure, regulation of factories, protection of emigrants, extension of higher education, metropolitan planning and construction. Such matters were left up to private activity in the past, but today “we know that the results of *laissez-faire* will be failure or at best meager benefit. Thus, power is concentrated more and more in the state, and the sphere of the state’s competence expands daily.”³³ By the time Liang wrote these lines, the somewhat free-wheeling and amorphous coterie of dedicated volunteers or handful of great statesmen on whom he had placed his hopes a year earlier had been replaced in his thinking by a more articulated state structure, in which that elite minority on which the country’s survival depended acted as the leaders of two major political parties, competing for power in the framework of the responsible cabinet system.³⁴

Earlier, the state, in the form of autocracy, was identified as the obstacle blocking man’s social and political self-realization, by monopolizing the public sphere, and preventing spontaneous organization. Now the traditional state was seen as self-serving and corrupt, but *laissez-faire*, while modern times demanded a more activist centralized structure to mobilize the nation’s collective potential. Liang Qichao’s review of the Chinese people’s capacities and responsibilities in the context of the international threat suggests the logic of this shift in thinking, but the question remained how to ensure that a powerful state would act in the interests of the nation, and nurture and channel the latent energies, creative powers, enthusiasms, and loyalties of the people. This question took on particular urgency as the prospect of some kind of constitutional government became ever more imminent. The question was, what kind? Specific institutional forms were now seen to have important implications for the relations between state and people.

For a variety of reasons within the domains of both practical benefit and political equity, reformers and revolutionaries alike wanted China to have a representative government. They were aware that in the West such government was historically the product of struggles between people and their governments, some more violent, some less so. In either case, representatives of the people struggled to gain or increase popular control over the government by a variety of means, leading to a common terminological and conceptual distinction (more

familiar in Europe than the United States) between the “government” in the sense of the executive or administration—that is, cabinet—on the one hand, and the people’s representative organs or institutions, as opposed to the “government,” on the other. Even without violent struggles, the representatives of the people were often able to undermine the power of the monarch’s government by refusing financial support for his policies. Liang Qichao himself had urged the Chinese people to extract reforms from the dynasty by nonpayment of taxes. Thus, the power of the purse became one crucial element in the story of political development and constitutional arrangements.³⁵ Another was the principle that the government must be responsible to the people. This principle was inherent in the periodic direct election of the chief executive in some republics. It was also realized in others, and even in constitutional monarchies, through the responsible cabinet system, in which the cabinet bore responsibility for government actions and was answerable to the parliament.

Against this background, the path toward constitutional government chosen by the Manchu dynasty served to galvanize the progressive opposition and focus its attention on the government’s—that is, the cabinet’s—responsibility to the people. The Qing dynasty’s announced plans for a new constitutional order similar to Japan’s were taken as an ominous sign, for the power of the emperor within the Japanese constitutional system was exceptionally great. Following this model, the Qing planners reserved power to the throne, and responded to demands for a responsible cabinet by specifying that the cabinet would be responsible to the throne, not the legislature.³⁶ And then the court proceeded, in edicts of May 8, 1911, to affirm its control over the largely Han Chinese bureaucracy by appointing a cabinet packed with Manchus, of whom the majority were members of the imperial clan, under Prince Qing as premier and with another Manchu as one of two vice-premiers.³⁷ Revolutionaries were less taken aback than gratified by the anti-Manchu ammunition the new cabinet provided them. But reformers, who had mounted three nationwide campaigns to petition for the immediate establishment of constitutional government, had clearly hoped to win real institutional power, and they were bitterly disillusioned.³⁸ A responsible cabinet had thus become a major goal for the constitutionalist reformers, and at the same time, revolutionaries, responding to the opportunity presented by the constitutionalists’ increasing impatience with the dynasty, also seized on the issue.

In their responses, revolutionaries presented more cogent and impressive arguments for the responsible cabinet system and party government than did Liang, not that Liang was slow to insist on it. In March he had already begun a series of articles on the responsible cabinet system in his *Guofeng bao*, in which he denounced the May 8 edicts’ treatment of the cabinet as an instrument of the Throne.³⁹ And in June, in a short article entitled “Political Parties and the Underlying Political Consensus,” Liang outlined the essentials of constitutional government, including the principles that the monarch routinely approves and promulgates laws passed by parliament, that in all political action taken in the

name of the throne, the ministers of state bear responsibility, that in case of conflict between the government and parliament, the government resigns or dissolves parliament, and that ministers are subject to interpellation in parliament.

Within such a system, Liang argued, political parties are inevitable and essential. If opponents of the government have better policies, they need only to form a big party and win a majority, in which case the government will then have to obey them. Likewise, to stay in power the government must have its own party's support. "This," said Liang, "is the meaning of the saying: 'Without political parties, it is impossible to work constitutional government.'" Not only in England and the United States, but even in Germany and Japan, their so-called transcendent nonparty governments require the support of one or two parties, for no cabinet which has lost the support of its parliament can survive in a constitutional order. "Without this principle, it is not a constitutional government." Even Japan, where Liang claimed to see this principle operating, could be a model for China, albeit an inferior one.⁴⁰

Taking real representative government to be an indispensable element of a constitutional system, and constitutional government to be an indisputable requirement for national survival, Liang needed only to show that in constitutional monarchies representation worked through the responsible cabinet system to complete his syllogism. Revolutionaries had other models to contemplate, and for some, their critique of the Qing plans' departure from the responsible cabinet system included the opportunistic motivation of winning constitutionalists away from the reform camp. One way or another, while Liang's arguments took constitutional monarchy for granted, the most articulate revolutionary advocates of the responsible cabinet/parliamentary/party government system brought forth more elaborate arguments revolving around two major issues. The first was the importance of ensuring popular support for the government through meaningful representation; the second was the destabilizing threat that open political struggle and popular checks on the government might pose to strong and effective national leadership, particularly where the people's representatives wielded the power of the purse.

The most substantial arguments on the revolutionary side came from Zhang Shizhao and Song Jiaoren. In London, from late 1910 to mid-1911, Zhang had been writing articles on British politics, the English constitution and the Qing plans, and sending them back to the *Imperial Daily* (*Diguo ribao*), a legal newspaper published by revolutionaries in Peking. In one lengthy series he described and discussed alternative forms of constitution, arguing strongly for the superiority of the English model. One article directly addressed the views of the Qing government's Constitutional Commission that, in a country where the government is sovereign (*daquan zhengzhi zhi guo*), as opposed to the parliament, the government must control the parliament, not vice versa. Far from arguing that the government should not control parliament, Zhang declared instead that a model twentieth-century government *should* wield *decisive* power. This did not,

however, mean that the government should be masters of the people, as he proceeded to show by reference to the English system. In England, he explained, the government, that is, the cabinet, very much dominates the parliament, controlling the agenda of debate and the flow of legislative action. "I have not seen that any of the countries which the Commissioners characterize as having 'sovereign governments' can compare with England in its government's ability to control the parliament," he wrote. If a strong government were their object, he argued, they should advocate the English system. But there, he noted, the strength of the government was due to its being a party government. Why could party government alone attain such power? Because, he answered, only in a party government is the talent and wisdom of the cabinet so markedly superior to that of the other members of parliament that they will accept the cabinet's leadership.⁴¹

Zhang's argument skipped around the underlying premise of the Qing Constitutional Commission, which was that the power of the *Throne* was to be preserved. But a clear consequence of Zhang's reasoning was that in order for China to enjoy a strong government, power would have to be in the hands of a party, not the Throne. A few days later, he quoted the *London Times*: "The source of all China's perils is her central government's incompetence and fragility. Everyone who knows China knows this, and doubts that there is any quick remedy." Zhang's remedy was party government: "A country cannot survive in the twentieth century without an extremely strong government and such a strong government simply cannot be attained except through party politics."⁴² Party government meant representative government, he contended, echoing his earlier articles' argument that the only way for a country to benefit from a party cabinet would be to have two large parties contesting elections on the basis of distinct alternative programs.⁴³

Song Jiaoren, recently returned from Japan and working incognito in Shanghai, was the authority on constitutional questions for the revolutionary newspaper, the *People's Stand* (*Minli bao*). Criticizing the new Qing cabinet in June 1911, he began by voicing the fear that if the Qing government continued on the same course, China would be lost in ten years. "A nation's strength and prosperity," he said, "depends entirely on the organization of the agencies that wield the power of the state; the cabinet, which brings them all together, is the head of the administration." As the agency upon which "the very life of constitutional government depends," a cabinet should provide united leadership and discharge clearly defined responsibilities.

Song had not always been so rigorous about cabinets. Despite his early suspicions of window-dressing constitutions, Japan's triumph over Russia during his exile in Tokyo made an extremely favorable impression on him. His initial admiration of Japan was based not on the virtues of its constitutional system but on the patriotism and civic and martial virtues of its people, assiduously fostered by its leaders. For this approach to government, with its stress on paternalistic

leadership and popular morale, he could find support in Western as well as Eastern wisdom, and he was for a time inclined to the view that institutions were of strictly secondary importance compared to the personal qualities of a people.⁴⁴

But by 1911, thoroughly disillusioned with the Japanese government's abuse of its power, Song pronounced Japan a constitutional country in name only, ruled in reality by cliques of militarists. This judgment appeared in his September 1911 article in the *Minli bao* on the change of the Japanese Cabinet, an attack on the Japanese political system clearly directed against its use in China as a model for preserving Qing monarchical power.⁴⁵

On the other hand, as Song considered the ways in which the people might wield power, he was forced also to consider the idea that giving power to their representatives meant taking power from the government, with a consequent weakening of the nation. Liang Qichao, with his visions of leadership by dedicated volunteers and great men, had not dealt with this problem, and may not have felt it to be a serious one, in the light of Japan's success. But by Song's standards, Japan was no success, and the contradiction between people's power and national strength was highlighted by discussion of the issue in Kobayashi Ushisaburō's massive treatise on *Comparative Public Finance*, which Song had recently translated.⁴⁶

In the historical sections of his work, Kobayashi clearly showed how elected legislatures had needed to gain some control of the national purse—to approve taxes and expenditures—if the people were to be protected from arbitrary and oppressive government.⁴⁷ But it was a clumsy and dangerous weapon because it threatened paralysis of a government whose budget the legislature could refuse to approve. He cited America and Australia as examples to prove his point, and claimed that the same problem in France exposed that country to grave international danger.⁴⁸ The Meiji constitution, by contrast, severely limited the budgetary pressure which the Diet could bring to bear on the government.⁴⁹ Japan may have pointed the way to fiscal and political stability for Kobayashi, but for Song Japan was no model of constitutional government. He had concluded, in fact, that the very system of executive budgeting which bypassed legislative control enabled the Japanese government to manage finances and the national economy in ways which were contrary to the people's interests and wishes, and not subject to their control.⁵⁰ Given the alternatives which Kobayashi presented, how could the requirements of national strength be reconciled with democracy?

To this dilemma, Zhang Shizhao, to whom Song acknowledged a great debt of gratitude for his articles on English government, provided an answer.⁵¹ As the British constitutional authority Walter Bagehot had shown, the power of the purse could be reserved to the people and at the same time their representatives' support of the government's budget and policies (an essential component of "civilized" government) assured, if the "tax imposers" (the legislature) and the "tax-requirers" (the executive) were of one accord. The genius of the English responsible cabinet system was that its avoidance of a separation of powers and

union of legislative and executive eliminated any paralyzing clashes between the two.⁵²

Thus it was not by wielding the club of budgetary control that parliament controlled the government; rather, the cabinet's dependence on parliament for its very incumbency gave parliament firm, albeit indirect, control over the budget. And while the cabinet had sufficient power to conduct its business expeditiously, the state further derived the strength that flowed from unity with its people. It was precisely the prospect of this kind of solidarity uniting all Chinese, from commoners to the highest officials, that, he contended, China's foreign oppressors feared.⁵³

Essential to the functioning of such a system was the party cabinet and competition between two major parties for an electoral majority. The majority view in parliament was that of the cabinet because the cabinet was drawn from the leaders of the majority party.⁵⁴ This led Zhang into a further discussion of real political parties and the functioning of a two-party system. Real parliamentary parties, he explained, existed to offer the voters real alternatives on important policy matters so that the policies of the party in power would be generally acknowledged as representing the views of the majority in the nation, while the party out of power could continue to argue for its policies in an effort to replace the party in power.⁵⁵

Here, then, was the resolution of the dilemma which Kobayashi had highlighted. But while Song was to make the party cabinet form of the responsible cabinet one of his main causes in his drive to shape China's new political order, this happened only after he had read another series of articles by Zhang, showing how a truly representative political order could become truly democratic, as well. These articles, which Song reprinted in his own newspaper, reported the recent struggles ultimately leading to England's parliamentary reform of 1911,⁵⁶ and provided the background for Song's own report on the final victory of what he called "England's Parliamentary Revolution."

England, for Song, had been a strongly conservative country, in which the power of the aristocracy severely limited the power of the people. The victory of Commons, however, provided clear evidence of the irresistible march of progressive trends throughout the world in the twentieth century. Not only had the principle of democracy triumphed, the reform had also permitted the passage of socially progressive tax measures, reminiscent of the Revolutionary League's goal of land equalization. What the English example showed and what Song so ecstatically hailed in this article was the universal modern trend from partial representative government to fully democratic government committed to social and economic justice.⁵⁷ Thus, the record of England's parliament not only showed how the proper kind of representative system could mobilize the national resources and generate national solidarity, but also how such a system could avoid the dangers of premature political participation by an ignorant electorate without precluding their progressive inclusion in the political process.

In the course of the 1911 Revolution, arguments in favor of the English

system (and the threat of a Yuan Shikai dictatorship) were persuasive enough to win the support of revolutionaries and reformers alike, even where political alliance was not forthcoming. Former adherents of constitutionalist reform elaborated on the advantages of a responsible cabinet system. The *Tongyi dang*, for example, published a translation of Lord James Bryce's famous *American Commonwealth*, sharply critical of the American constitution's separation of powers in comparison with the English unity of parliament and cabinet. A more direct indication of the lessons that constitutionalists drew from Bryce's work was the *Discussion of Guidelines for the Establishment of the Chinese State*, published in mid-April of 1912 by Tang Hualong's supporters in the Society for Deliberation on the Building of the Republic. The purpose of the society was to lay the groundwork for creating openly competing political parties.⁵⁸ In this pamphlet, the proclamation of this purpose and appeals to join in support of it were buttressed by a long article ghost-written by Liang Qichao. Liang stressed the grave perils that faced China in a fiercely competitive international arena, and called for a unified country and a protectionist and interventionist economic policy promoting economic development through private enterprise.

"Henceforth," Liang wrote, "China has no alternative but to use her government to forge her people into a single unit to compete with the outside world. We will turn our entire population into the soldiers of a single army as it were, or students in a single school." These metaphors, echoing the unity which Liang had earlier expected to emerge spontaneously from the activities of the *xuehui*, now reverberate with a different message: the state must impose the unity.⁵⁹

Despite this quasi-fascist rhetoric, Liang went on to recommend the kind of parliamentary/responsible cabinet system described in Zhang Shizhao's articles and in Bryce's work, repeating the same arguments for them. (Indeed, the differences between this pamphlet and Liang's prerevolutionary recommendations indicate strongly that he had in the meantime been very much influenced by Zhang Shizhao.) The strongest government, he now asserted, was one in which the highest officers in the executive branch were drawn from the legislative, so that both branches were fused into a whole. The key to the system the pamphlet recommended was the competition of two major political parties, which would serve as the basis for a responsible cabinet. In such a system, he argued, there was a natural harmony between the leadership of the executive branch (the cabinet), and the majority party in the legislature. The strength of the executive power in this system lay in the prime minister's unchecked authority to appoint his own cabinet. But his incumbency depended on the popularity of his party, and if the majority of the parliament turned against him, his government could be forced to resign, as periodically happened in England. Such a system, Liang argued, guaranteed that the power of the government would not be used in a way contrary to the wishes of the people.⁶⁰

By mid-1912 strong support for a full-fledged responsible cabinet system cut across the divisions between former revolutionaries and reformers. The emerging

consensus reflected a school of thought then, and still, widespread in the West, according to which the English model provided the most effective form of representative government. The support was broad, and surprisingly persistent. Even after Song Jiaoren's assassination, the failure of the second revolution, and defections under the pressure of Yuan's threats and blandishments, the new national assembly's constitutional commission proceeded to produce a Temple of Heaven constitution designed to subject the president and the cabinet to the control of the assembly. Only after Yuan had dissolved the parliament was he able to achieve the kind of constitution he wanted, and that only by presidential fiat.⁶¹

If any common theme binds the turn-of-the-century discourse of civil society together with the 1911 emphasis on the party as the key to China's new political order, it is nationalism. This is not to say that these two remedies for China's ills had nothing else to recommend them. Universal technological, intellectual, and moral progress, the fulfillment of man's social potential, the elimination of corruption and tyranny, and the promotion of justice were all cited, in one way or another, often with considerable passion, in support of private, collective civic initiative and democratic, or at least representative, government. It might further be argued that the appeal of such values tipped the scales in favor of civil society and representative government as opposed to other means of promoting national strength. But national strength was also to be served, and by no means to be sacrificed.

And as change in the political order became the order of the day, the role of the citizen was diminished. In the earlier period, the government was expected to stand aside, or at most, offer a bit of support, as independent citizens generated collective strength through their spontaneously organized cooperation. In the later period, Song Jiaoren proclaimed "the organization of the agencies that wield the power of the state" to be the key to the "nation's strength and prosperity." Zhang Shizhao pronounced himself willing to "regress" to the Japanese constitutional model, or even an unconstitutional enlightened despotism, if those who disagreed with him could show how that would lead to a stronger government.⁶² Liang Qichao had for a time argued that enlightened despotism was just what China needed. He had abandoned that idea, but now he argued that as opposed to Europe, where *laissez-faire* had been an appropriate remedy for state oppression, China's government organs had not been much involved in the life of the people and that it was time for the government to take an active role with them, and support their interests in the arena of international competition. Its failure to do so had left Chinese with only weak ties to their nation. "The fate of the nation depends on the government," he asserted. It was in this context that he assigned the state the task of molding the people into a single unit, like the soldiers of a single army or the students of a single school.

While the introduction of a robust civil society into China had been advocated for the sake of the nation's strength, in itself it was not equivalent to a national consciousness, but rather a general public spirit. At the turn of the century, the

image of Western civil society embodied the appeal of a certain ideal to scholars, a kind of *datong* community, cooperating and sharing without regard to particularistic identities, and spontaneously productive of useful things. Parties and other political institutions were mentioned as reflecting the same kind of private and civic organizational capacities that generated other associations. By the time of the revolution, however, according to the emerging consensus regarding the necessary political order, they reflected a sense that what was all-important for the nation was mobilization at the national level by the most comprehensive organization—the government, to formulate and implement policy and deploy resources. This did not necessarily rule out citizen initiative, but it did give the government the dominant role in the country's public life, even to the point of making it the creator of society—that is, the nation—at the highest level. Thus it became the people's schoolmaster. And in contrast to the earlier discussions' emphasis on the universal instinctive talent for organization as manifested in voluntary associations, the role of parties as the key to the functioning of the national community was now profoundly elitist. Parties did not well up from the common people, independent of the government. Majority party leaders *were* the government, and minority party leaders were aspirants to the role. To be sure, parties made the government representative, but they did so simply by presenting the people (or those who could vote) with a choice. The most important association, from the standpoint of national life, was not voluntary, and for most taxpayers, the form of participation in it was limited to accepting its guidance and voting for those who would take and spend their money.

As early as 1897 Tang Caichang had described modern Western parties as representing the competing interests of their constituents, but openly and legitimately, whereas the traditional Chinese political culture had driven such interests underground. By 1912, parties were supposed to articulate and pursue the common public interest, for the nation as a whole. The change in vision and emphasis is striking, the significance not entirely clear. Nationalist imperatives were certainly a major factor contributing to the vision of a unitary national community, but not, perhaps, more important than a recognition that in any modern state, and especially one in which the preconditions for political participation remained poorly developed, competent management was at a premium. And such management, without the abuse of power, could best be assured not by relying on diffuse and spontaneous people power encouraged by a weak government, but by the organized and open competition of elite parties which could lead a strong one.

Notes

Much of the research for this paper was conducted under an exchange with the Institute of Modern History, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, on a grant from the Committee on

Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China. Further research was made possible by a grant from the Wang Institute of Graduate Studies.

Abbreviations:

ZXB Zhixin bao. Macao, 1897–1901. Microfilm obtained from the University of Washington Library.

QIB Qingyi bao. Yokohama, 1898–1901. Taiwan photographic reprint in 12 vols., 1966.

XXB Xiang xue bao. Changsha, 1897–1898. Taipei photographic reprint under title *Xiang xue xinbao*, 4 vols., 1966.

MLB Minli bao. Shanghai, 1911–1913.

SWB Shiwu bao. Shanghai, 1896–1898. Taiwan photographic reprint of 56 of 69 issues in 6 vols., 1969.

DGRB Diguo ribao. Peking, 1910–1911.

Note: Pagination in the Chinese journals is not consecutive, so in addition to asterisked original page numbers (where legible), I have provided Roman and Arabic numerals at the end of references to the three reprint editions listed above, indicating the volume and page cited in the reprint edition.

1. Andrew J. Nathan, *Chinese Democracy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Frederic Wakeman, Jr., “The Civil Society and Public Sphere Debate: Western Reflections on Chinese Political Culture,” *Modern China* 19.2:108–138 (April 1993).

2. *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 240.

3. Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

4. For alternatives to the Darwinian paradigm see Don C. Price, *Russia and the Roots of the Chinese Revolution, 1896–1911* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), ch. 6, Conclusion; and James R. Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1983), pp. 63–65, 67–71, 140–144, 189–190.

5. Pusey, pp. 57–65.

6. “Lun baoguan you yi yu guo shi” (On the contribution of the press to national affairs), *SWB* 1:1–2* (22/7/14), I:3–4.

7. Ding Wenjiang, *Liang Rengong xiansheng nianpu changpian chugao* (Long draft chronological biography of Liang Qichao) (Taipei, 1959) 1:32–33; Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890–1907* (Cambridge, MA: 1971), pp. 95–96.

8. “Lun xuexiao” (On schools), *SWB* 10:1–3a* (22/10/1), I:621–624.

9. *SWB* 51:1* (24/1/21), VI:3447. This translation is based on Hao Chang's, in his *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, p. 100, but modified to suggest better a sense of spontaneous cooperation rather than uniformity. In this sense, *guo* is better translated as “nation” than as “state.”

10. “Lun baoguan,” 1b,3*; I:3,6. “Lun xuexiao,” 1a–b*; I:621–622.

11. For another kind of international organization, see Liu Zhenlin, “Lun Zhongguo yi kai saihui yi xing shangwu” (On the advantages of China's holding an international exposition to promote commerce), *ZXB* 16:1–5 (23/4/6). In this article the display of advances and products in all fields encourages progress and development around the world, in a spirit of friendly competition and mutual stimulus.

12. “Lun geguo biantong zheng jiao zhi you wu gongli” (On the presence or absence of the principle of the common interest in the reforms of the various countries), *XXB* 5–9:16–36b* (31 May–10 July 1897) III:2035–2076.

13. Wang Kangnian treated scholarly societies, public societies and commercial societies as expressions of *aili*, the power of love, or a spirit of cooperation and mutual support. “Yi aili zhuan guoyun shuo” (On reversing the fate of the nation with the power of love), *SWB* 13:1–3b* (22/10/21), II:759–764.

14. *Ibid.*, 2b*; I:624.
15. "Lun Zhongguo bianfa bi zi guanzhi shi" (China's reform must begin with the bureaucracy), *SWB* 24:4b* (23/3/21) III:1598; "Zonglun" (General discussion), *SWB* 28:2* (23/4/11) III:1864.
16. "Gongsi," *SWB* 34:1–4* (23/7/1), IV:2273–2279.
17. "Zou she Tianjing Zhongxi xuetang zhangcheng" (Memorial proposing the regulations for a Sino-Western college in Tientsin), *SWB* 11:7b-8* (22/10/1) II:702–703; "Libu yifu zou xueshi zhengdun gesheng shuyuan yuchu rencai zhe" (Board of rites memorial in response to a Hanlin scholar's memorial calling for the reorganization of the various provinces' academies to build up a fund of human talent), *SWB* 22:5b-6* (23/3/1) IV:1462–1463; Ou, "Bianfa zishang zixia yi" (Reform from above and from below), *ZXB* 29:3 (23/8/1).
18. *Xiushui dongshou* (pseud.), "Aiguo ziqiang ge" (Patriotic self-strengthening song), *QIB* 80:1* (5 May 1901), X:5155. "Sheng xuehui xu," *Qingyi bao quanbian* (Complete QIB anthology) 25:149. For discussion of voluntary public associations in the Qing not based on kinship, see Angela Ki-che Leung, "To Chasten the Society: The Development of Widow Homes in the Ch'ing, 1773–1911," in Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, ed., *Family Process and Political Process in Modern Chinese History* (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1992) I:413–450; and Mary Backus Rankin, *Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China: Zhejiang Province, 1865–1911* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), esp. pp. 15–27, 136–148.
19. "Shangxue" *XXB* II:1473.
20. "Shanghui yi" (Discussion of commercial societies), *QIB* 10:1–3*, 12:1–3b* (1, 20 April 1899) II:583–587, 715–721. Cf. Rankin.
21. "Shizhong dexing xiangfan xiangcheng yi" (Contradiction and complementarity among ten virtues) *QIB* 82:1–4* (16 June 1901), X:5225–5231.
22. "Bianfa zishang zixia yi" (Discussion of reform from above and below), *ZXB* 29:1–4* (23/8/1).
23. "Lun da di geguo bianfa jie you min qi," *SWB* 50:1–3* (23/12/11), VI:3375–3379.
24. Zhang Binglin, "Lun xuehui you da yi yu huangren ji yi baohu" (How study societies are of great benefit to the yellow race and should be urgently protected), *SWB* 19:3b-6b* (23/2/1) III:1250–1256. Mai Menghua, "Minyi xizu" (Preface to *The People's Duty*) *SWB* 26:1b-2* (23/4/11) III:1729; and "Minyi zonglun" (The People's Duty: General Discussion) *SWB* 28:1b-4b* (23/5/1) III:1864–70.
25. "Ji ruo suo yuan lun" (Seeking the sources of accumulated weakness) *QIB* 81:13–15*, 82:16–17* (7, 16, June 1901) X:5197–5202, 5255–5257.
26. "Xin Guangdong," in Li Shaoling, *Ou Jujia xiansheng zhuan* (Biography of Ou Jujia) (Taipei: Li Shaoling, 1960), pp. 73, 84, 91.
27. Fei Xiaotong, *From the Soil, the Foundations of Chinese Society: A Translation of Fei Xiaotong's "Xiangtu Zhongguo,"* Gary G. Hamilton and Wang Zheng, tr. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), chs. 4, 5.
28. On the questions of the people's spirit and servility, see my "Elite and Popular Heterodoxy in the Late Ch'ing," in K. C. Liu, ed., *Heterodoxy in Late Imperial China* (University of California Press, forthcoming).
29. On the rise and function of clans in the Qing dynasty, see Kai-wing Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China: Ethics, Classics, and Lineage Discourse* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994) esp. pp. 71–84, 220–226.
30. Cangjiang (pseud.), "Zhongguo quantu zhi xiwang yu guomin zeren," *Yinbing shi wenji* (Taipei: Taiwan Zhonghua shuju, 1978), 26:29; *Guofeng bao* 2.7 (9 April 1911).
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35; *Guofeng bao* 2:10 (9 May 1911).
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 17; *Guofeng bao* 2:6, 7 (30 March, 9 April 1911).

33. *Zhongguo liguo da fangzhen shangjue shu* (Shanghai: Gonghe jianshe taolun hui (Society for Deliberation on the Establishment of the Republic), 1912), p. 19.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

35. See, for example, “Wuhu Eguo zhi lixian wenti” (Ah! The question of establishing a constitution in Russia), *HMTP* 58:73–76 (about December 1904) and “*Min bao* yu *Xinmin congbao* bianbo zhi gangling” (Outlines of the debate between the *Minbao* and the *Xinmin congbao*), *Min bao* 3 supplement (*hao wai*; Beijing photographic reprint, 1957).

36. John H. Fincher, *Chinese Democracy: The Self-Government Movement in Local, Provincial and National Politics, 1905–1914* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1981), p. 173 n. 47, and Ming-Qing Archives, Palace Museum (Beijing), ed., *Qingmo choubei lixian dangan shiliao*, 2 vols. (Archival) materials on the preparations for constitutional government at the end of the Qing dynasty, (Beijing, 1979; hereafter *QMCBLX*), I:547.

37. Fincher, pp. 173–175. *QMCBLX*, I:558–565.

38. Clashes between the National Consultative Assembly and the Grand Council had led to an impeachment of the Councillors and a request that the Grand Council be made responsible to the Assembly, or be replaced by a responsible cabinet. See Fincher, p. 173.

39. See his “*Zeren neige shiyi*” (Explanation of the responsible cabinet), *Yinbing shi wenji*, 27:1–26.

40. Liang Qichao, “*Zhengdang yu zhengzhi shang zhi xintiao*” (Political parties and the political credo), *Yinbing shi wenji*, 26:50–55; *Guofeng bao* 2.14:7–15 (17 June 1911).

41. Qiutong, “*Wen he zhong zhengfu shi neng caozong yihui?*” (What kind of government does it take to control parliament?), *Diguo ribao* (hereafter *DGRB*), 1 May, 1911. All of Zhang’s articles cited here are signed with the pen name Qiutong, which I omit in subsequent footnotes.

42. “*Zhengdang zhengzhi guo shi yu jinri zhi Zhongguo hu?*” (Is party government really suited to present-day China?), *DGRB*, 29 May, 1911. Cf. “Russia and China,” *Times*, 16 March 1911.

43. “*Zhongguo ying ji zuzhi zhi zhengdang, qi xingzhi dang ruhe?*” (What kind of political parties should be organized in China at present?), *DGRB*, 13 March 1911, and “*Lun zizhengyuan yiyuan dang cai zhengdang bule zhi fa*” (How the National Assemblymen should divide themselves into parties), *DGRB*, 17 March 1911.

44. Don C. Price, “*Geming yu xianfa: Song Jiaoren zhengzhi cele di fazhan*” (Revolution and constitution: the development of Song Jiaoren’s political strategy), in *Zhonghua shuju*, ed., *Jinian xinhai geming qishi zhoubian nian xueshu taolun hui lunwen ji*, 3 vols. (Papers from the conference commemorating the 70th anniversary of the 1911 revolution), (Beijing, 1983), III:2621–2622.

45. “*Riben neige gengdie gan yan*” (Thoughts on the change of the Japanese cabinet), *MLB*, 5 September 1911; *Ji*, pp. 305–307; Cf. “*Qinding xianfa wenti*” (The problem of an imperially granted constitution) and “*Xianzheng meng ke xing yi*” (Stop dreaming about constitutionalism!), *MLB*, 11 February and 25 March 1911; *Song Jiaoren ji* (Collected works of Song Jiaoren) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981; hereafter *Ji*), pp. 153, 196.

46. After graduating in political science from the Imperial University, Kobayashi worked in the Treasury and taught at Meiji University. He published *Hikaku zaiseigaku* (Comparative public finance) in 1905, won a Doctorate in Law at the Imperial University in 1907, and was in the same year made Chief of the Department of Finance in the Taiwan Colonial Administration, in which capacity he served until his retirement from the civil service in 1910. For some of the above data I am indebted to Mr. Kubo Tōro, who also drew my attention to “*Chihō zaisei ron no meicho*” (A classic in local finance theory), *Chihō jiji shokunin kenkyū* (Studies in local self-government personnel) 1981, 9:82–84.

47. *Bijiao caizhengxue* (Tokyo, 1910; reprint Tokyo 1917), II:436, 441, 443, 445, 447, 449, 463–468.

48. *Bijiao caizhengxue*, II:302–307.

49. *Ibid.*, II:302–303, 308–323.

50. “Zai lun zhengfu jie Riben zhai shi zhao yuan” (More on the government’s contracting a ten-million-yuan debt from Japan), *MLB*, 11 April 1911; *Ji*, p. 214; and “Riben neige gengdie gan yan.”

51. Zhang Shizhao, “Yu Huang Keqiang xiasheng xiangjiao shimo” (A complete account of my acquaintance with Huang Xing), *Xinhai geming huiyi lu* (Reminiscences of the 1911 Revolution), (Beijing, 1962), II:142. It should be noted that Zhang Shizhao’s articles were hardly Song’s only source of information on English government, but in view of the attention Song paid to them, it seems likely that no other source had so prepared him to view England as a model. Kobayashi’s treatment of England, in particular, did not discuss the advantages of the unity of executive and legislative, but instead drew attention to Parliament’s lack of regular annual review of the fixed budget (II:245–246, 302–303), and suggested that legislative control of the purse represented a victory for the English nobility (II:455). Such aspects of the English system would naturally have been severe drawbacks in the eyes of a democrat. In his article on the parliamentary reform of 1911, discussed below, Song himself summed up the popular image, which he shared, of England as a hitherto conservative and aristocratic country. It was the attention Zhang drew to the trend toward democratization in England that seems suddenly to have cast that country in an altogether new light, as a way out of the apparent contradiction between democracy and strength.

52. “Zhengdang neige guo you yu feizhengdang neige hu?” (Is a party cabinet really superior to a non-party cabinet?), *DGRB*, 19 August 1911. In casting parliament as defender of the taxpayer, Zhang’s translation distorted Bagehot’s position, but not seriously. See Bagehot’s *The English Constitution* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961), pp. 69, 73–74, 176–177.

53. “Guohui wanneng shuo” (The doctrine of the omnipotence of parliament), *DGRB*, 18, 19, 20 January, 1911.

54. “Lun Zhongguo zhengdang zhengzhi dang yingshi fasheng” (It is time for party government to appear in China), *DGRB*, 26, 27 February 1911.

55. “Zhongguo ying ji zuzhi zhi zhengdang qi xingzhi dang ruhe?” (What is the nature of the political parties that China should organize forthwith?), “Lun zhengdang zhi zuoyong ji qi jinxing zhi fa” (On the functions of political parties and how they should be carried out), and “Lun zizhengyuan yiyuan dang cai zhengdang bule zhi fa” (Members of the National Assembly should adopt the system of organizing into plitical parties), *DGRB*, 12–13, 17–18, 19–21 March 1911.

56. “Yingguo zhengzheng ji” (Account of the political struggle in England) ran intermittently through February in the *Imperial Daily*.

57. “Yingguo zhi guohui geming” (England’s parliamentary revolution), *MLB*, 30–31 August 1911; *Ji*, pp. 298–303.

58. *Zhongguo liguo da fangzhen shangjue shu* (Discussion of guidelines for the establishment of the Chinese state), pp. 77–78, 89.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 22. Cf. n. 9, above.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 51–57.

61. Portions of the preceeding six pages have appeared in somewhat different form in Don C. Price, “Constitutional Alternatives and Democracy in the Revolution of 1911,” ch. 8 of *Ideas Across Cultures*, Paul Cohen and Merle Goldman, eds., Harvard East Asian Monographs, 150 (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1990). Reprinted here with publisher’s permission.

62. “Zhengdang zhengzhi guo shi yu jinri zhi Zhongguo hu?” (Is party government really suited to present-day China?), 29 May 1911.

Publicists and Populists: Including the Common People in the Late Qing New Citizen Ideal

Joan Judge

The greatest challenge reformists faced in the early twentieth century was not Western gunboats or foreign technology, not institutional restructuring or constitutional law. It was “the people”—the illiterate “lower levels of society” (*xialiu shehui* or *xiadeng shehui*), the anonymous, unknowable, and often dreaded *min*, excluded from participation and power but always invoked in Confucian and reformist political and social discourse.

In the last Qing decade, the journalists who wrote for the Shanghai daily *Shibao* (“Eastern Times”) confronted the issue of “the people” in the context of rebellion and domestic upheaval. The sequence of reform and protest which had been a leitmotif throughout Chinese history reached a new intensity in this period. Fifty-six incidents of scattered opposition to the New Policies (*Xinzheng*) erupted between 1904 and 1907, followed by a crescendo of protests between 1908 and 1911.¹ Five particular uprisings received the *Shibao* journalists’ greatest attention and became the subject of investigations, reports, and analytical editorials in the newspaper. They were the Ping-Li-Liu uprising of late 1906 and early 1907, which took place in the Hunan-Jiangxi border region; the Danyang, Jiangsu, uprising of August 1909; the Changsha, Hunan, rice riots of April 1910; the Laiyang, Shandong, uprising of July 1910; and the anti-self-government protests in Chuansha, Jiangsu, in March 1911.

The reform publicists’ interpretations of and commentaries on these disturbances revealed a tension between the two forces inherent in their status as new-style intellectuals—elitism and nationalism. Their paternalistic posture to-

ward the common people—reflected in a broad spectrum of attitudes, from benign concern to condescension and contempt—was inherent in the nature of their political ambitions. Believing that the reform of the political system was premised on the reform of the political behavior of the masses, the journalists worked from the unspoken assumption that they alone were capable of formulating and executing this reform. Taking it upon themselves to speak for those who had not known the privilege of education, they cast the common people into “a state of inertia and unrealized potential” referring to them in even the most sympathetic treatments as *yumin* (ignorant masses) and *chichi zhi mang* (ignorant people).² While the use of such terms reflected a certain reality—the rural people were largely uneducated, particularly in the villages (*xiangcun*) and market towns (*shizhen*)—more important, it is a testimony to the enormous gulf the reformists sensed between themselves and those they strove to transform.

This distant, often elitist and paternalistic attitude toward the common people was complemented by and often in tension with the journalists’ more prevalent, nationalist view. Realizing that the quest for wealth and power could be fulfilled only if the people were enlightened, renovated, and included in the enterprise, the new publicists were committed to *including* the common people in their national project rather than *imposing* this project on them. Proponents of educational, industrial, and institutional reform, they remained at the same time committed to defending the common people when advances were made at their expense. Seeking to fulfill their two objectives of national reform and social justice, the journalists took on a dual role of cultural translation, serving both as advocates for the common people vis-à-vis reform elites and officials and as advocates for the reform project vis-à-vis the common people.

Refusing to simplistically label the protesters as revolutionaries or lawless barbarians, the journalists brought the complexities of the disturbances—their sources and meanings—into the print-mediated public realm. Filtering the common people’s issues and grievances through their own lens and their own texts, the journalists were not creating the discourse *of* the common people but, rather, their own discourse *on* the common people. While this practice raises questions about the educated elite’s ability to speak authoritatively for others, it served to advance the new publicists’ own agenda of renegotiating society’s relationship with the state and drawing the people into the political process.³ Rejecting the Confucian view that the masses could be made to follow but not to understand, the journalists devised new strategies of rendering the objectives of political reform intelligible to an often isolated and resistant rural populace. This dual role of cultural translation in the last years of Qing rule contributed to the formation of a new political culture, which, through May Fourth and on to the Communists, would keep edging “the people” closer to center stage.

The Redeemable and the Lost

The new elites maintained their commitment to uplifting and reforming the common people even as villagers resisted the implementation of the New Policies, and even as rioters attacked and destroyed the local self-government institutions that were the embodiment of the reformist ideal of enlightened nationhood. They did so by constructing two mutually exclusive categories of common people—the educable and the incorrigible, the righteous and the wayward, the redeemable and the lost—which allowed them to accept the most egregious acts on the part of the common people as the machinations of a wicked minority, without losing faith in the ultimate reformability of the virtuous majority. The minority included bandits, brigands, and robbers (*feitu*), wicked people, villains, or outlaws (*youmin*), pettifoggers, mischiefs (*haoshi zhi tu*), Buddhist monks (*heshang*), and so-called witches (*nüwu*).⁴ Bearers of backwardness and superstition, these people directly impeded the reformists' plans for extending the citizenship ideal to the uneducated masses.

The most pernicious among the wicked people were those who became known as the ringleaders (*zhudong zhe*). The journalist Bai Yi (whose pseudonym means a common person without rank), who wrote a seven-part investigation of the Ping-Li-Liu uprising in April 1907, described how the ringleaders recruited their followers (*xiecong zhe*): "When their robbing and pillaging campaigns are successful and their forces are strengthened, then the ringleaders try to force law-abiding subjects to enter their ranks and follow their ways."⁵ In an article on the resolution of the Chuansha anti-local self-government uprising in 1911, a journalist using the pen name Hui (meaning Discouraged or Disappointed) advocated that "we divide the group of rioters in two: those who caused the trouble and those who were forced to join the rebellion." Hui described the former—the ringleaders—as jobless wasters who would take advantage of any situation to make trouble. "It would be in accordance with provisions in the law concerning the regulation of rebellious populations to arrest and severely punish these individuals without showing the slightest leniency. As for those who were forced to join the rebellion, they were not driven by a well-defined mission of opposition to the authorities. They were simply coerced into going along with the ringleaders."⁶

The distinction between good and bad people was most clearly articulated in discussions like Hui's of the appropriate punishment for those involved in the various disturbances. A commentator on the Danyang case urged that those who were "guilty of homicide and looting" would have to pay reparations so that "the power of the law would be protected and the importance of human life would be emphasized." The punishment should be much lighter, however, "if the rebels were only guilty of setting fire to official buildings and wounding underlings in the magistrate's office." Such actions merely reflected the desperation of the impoverished, and the individuals responsible for them should not be put in the

same category as rioters (*luanmin*).⁷ “As for the masses who merely went along with the ringleaders in the 1910 Changsha rice riots,” the journalist Li Yuerui, using the name Xi Song (the title of the ninth chapter of the *Chu Zi* meaning To Lament), claimed that “they should be amnestied for their past wrongs and given the opportunity to reform.”⁸ At the same time, “the heads of the rebellion must be severely dealt with.”⁹

There were both old and new components to this method of dividing up society. It resonated, first of all, with the longstanding distinction between good people (*liangmin*) and wicked people or outlaws (*youmin*). The kind of people considered undesirable by the new publicists were often the same as those excoriated by imperial officials. Both lists of undesirables were based not so much on class as on occupation, attitude, and opposition to authority. One important difference, however, between the official position and the early twentieth-century reform discourse was that the journalists viewed a much larger number of the “wicked people” as reformable.¹⁰ Bai Yi claimed that the line between an outlaw (*youmin*) and a law-abiding subject (*liangmin*) was not always clear because the official army, to take one example, conducted itself worse than the so-called outlaws did. “In my opinion just as the attributes of the citizenry must be very different from the attributes of officialdom, the behavior of the outlaws must be even more clearly distinguishable from the behavior of the official army. In examining the facts, however, we find this is far from true.” Bai Yi also took issue with the authorities’ claim that the Ping-Li-Liu protesters conducted themselves as violently as outlaws.¹¹

In stressing the reformability of the bad elements, the reformists did not, however, go as far as the late Qing revolutionaries in embracing secret society leaders and activists. Whereas the revolutionaries emphasized the character—notably the patriotism and spirit (*minqi*)—of popular heterodox sectarians as the key source of the masses’ potential as citizens, the reformists continued to group them with the nonreformable minority.¹² Bai Yi described secret society members as mere thugs: “Although the nucleus of the outlaws are the descendants of the Hong Bang’s impoverished caves, they have forgotten the original intentions of their predecessors. . . . Now, the society consists of nothing but crafty individuals gifted with the skills of scoundrels. Urban hoodlums, they employ these skills to steal food.”¹³

The *Shibao* editorialists’ disdain for secret societies was premised, in part, on their own experience of failed collaboration with secret society forces. The newspaper’s publisher and contributing writer, Di Baoxian, and its chief editor, Chen Leng, for example, had participated in the tragic uprising of the Independent Army in 1901, an effort orchestrated by reformists but largely dependent on bandit forces.¹⁴ It was first-hand experience of this kind of violent misadventure which made the reformists skeptical of the political utility of secret societies and led them toward a gradualist approach to popular renewal. Bai Yi explained why the secret societies could not be relied upon as a coherent political force. “They

can hardly hold themselves together as a society," he claimed, "and have never so much as dreamt of so-called nationalism (*guojia sixiang*) or so-called ethnicity (*minzu sixiang*) or so-called social psychology (*shehui xinli*). So to say that the nucleus of the outlaws holds revolutionary objectives, that it is qualified to create a nation and forge an ideology, this is to see a mouse and consider it to be a tiger, to grasp a fish and consider it to be a dragon, to catch a chicken and consider it to be a phoenix."¹⁵

Rather than attempt to channel the energy of secret society members and other "wicked people," the reform publicists devoted their attention to including and educating the "good people." As the number of antireform protests escalated in the last Qing decade, the reformists realized that many of these "good people" were involved in the uprisings and that their claims were, in part, justified. The journalists used the press to demonstrate that the protesters were not subversive rebels following a revolutionary plan, as the officials would depict them; rather, they were desperate rioters who reverted to violence out of hunger and despair. Furthermore, the people's plight could not be considered in isolation but had to be viewed within the context of official and social structures so dysfunctional that injustice had become endemic. The journalists' personal on-site investigations of the disturbances, their reporting of the events and analyses of their implications, broadened the discourse on the common people and mobilized elites—in the capital, in provincial assemblies, and in local areas—to focus more attention on the problems of the countryside.

New Medium, New Representations

The journalists' role as the common people's advocate was not new; the literati had long served as spokesmen for the masses in the Confucian humanist tradition. What was new, however, was their mode of advocacy—the press rather than the petition—and their audience—the public rather than the prince. In the early twentieth century, the new print medium played an important role in transforming longstanding patterns of popular protest. Whereas the only means of remonstration available to the common people throughout most of Chinese history had been collective rural protest, in the last decade of Qing rule, the reform publicists opened a new channel for the expression of popular grievances. At a time when the coercive power of local elites was strengthening and the reforming ambitions of the state were becoming more intrusive on local society, the new publicists gave the common people a public voice.

The earlier forms of popular protest were already becoming increasingly obsolete in the last Qing decade when, as part of the program of national strengthening, local managers were granted new authority to implement reforms and repress internal disorder. Despite the recent outburst of popular disturbances, an editorialist wrote in 1908, "effective means were being developed to deal with them. Telegrams could be more rapidly transmitted, rifles were more widely

available, and transport barges were more agile." The role of the local police had also been reinforced and institutionalized in the countryside. For these various reasons, the essayist claimed, "we can rest assured that the recent wave of banditry will never reach the proportions of the Nian rebellions under the Xianfeng [r. 1851–1862] and Tongzhi [r. 1862–1875] emperors."¹⁶

Just as the familiar means of protest were becoming less effective in protecting the common people's rights against an ever-encroaching elite, the press was developing as a new form of advocacy for popular grievances. Several *Shibao* journalists took their new advocacy role very seriously, going beyond merely editorializing on events by conducting personal investigations of the conditions that led to the late Qing disturbances. Bai Yi, for example, claimed that his seven-part investigation of the Ping-Li-Liu uprising was based on "what I have personally heard and the evidence accumulated over several months of investigation."¹⁷ Another editorialist who analyzed the reasons for official incompetence in controlling rural banditry stated that he had come to understand the situation "through my personal experience in the countryside. I have heard with my own ears and seen with my own eyes the local situation which I have described." Conceding that each province had its own particularities, he nonetheless maintained that his observations could be generalized.¹⁸

As rural uprisings were increasingly discussed at length in newspaper editorials and reports, the press provided socially concerned elites with a forum for translating the common people's inarticulate and often violent claims into expressions of public opinion that demanded serious consideration.¹⁹ The new print medium also facilitated communication among educated persons on these problems to an extent that had not been possible through the channel of official petitions and memorials. As the journalists wrote reports and editorials pleading the common people's cause, the offending reform managers responded in some cases, using the press to build their own defense. These reform elites' reports often spurred independent investigations of particular incidents, such as Bai Yi's reportage on Ping-Li-Liu, which themselves generally conveyed some further information on the protesters' views. In the aftermath of the Chuansha uprising, for example, local self-government officials (many of whom were members of the Pudong Club, a merchant association of Chuansha residents in Shanghai) personally wrote reports on the disturbance. These reports became the source of articles on the incident printed in *Shibao*, and these articles in turn gave rise to an outside magistrate's investigation of the conflict. The magistrate's report, which also appeared in *Shibao*, presented further information on the protesters' version of the events.²⁰

In addition to *Shibao*, which had more of a national profile, many regional newspapers also took up the role of protester-advocates in reporting on the uprisings.²¹ Providing high officials and men of influence who were natives of an area (and who were more likely to get involved in intra-county disputes than was the court or the provincial governors) with a new and effective medium for

forwarding their petitions on and understanding of the rural situation, the press thus took the popular protests out of their discrete regional settings and placed them under broader scrutiny in the print media of the public realm. Making the common people's concerns an issue in the late Qing social discourse, the new publicists contributed to a stronger sense of solidarity between those who sympathized with the protesters. They also heightened national consciousness of rural issues. In his "Announcement to the Hunanese High Officials" concerning the 1910 Changsha rice riots, Xi Song wrote of this rising collective consciousness: "The Changsha disturbance erupted with a sudden and violent force. As fellow sufferers, the 22 provinces all felt sympathy for Changsha in its misfortune. How, then, will it be possible to limit such protests in the future?"²²

As one of the key advocates for the protesters' demands, *Shibao* was instrumental in this process of disseminating news, heightening consciousness, and encouraging solidarity among urban elites sympathetic with the rural masses throughout China. In an effort to push social perceptions beyond the rigid categories of the Confucian moral discourse on the common people, the journalists offered sociological and economic interpretations of the uprisings. Manifesting their forward-looking nationalism, they no longer exclusively analyzed rural unrest in terms of the breakdown of dependency between ruler and ruled and the *minben* construct of the people as the foundation of the nation.²³ Rather, they introduced and debated the importance of new sociopolitical phenomena, such as economic stages of development, transportation infrastructure, and revolutionary activity.

In his seven-part investigation of the Ping-Li-Liu uprising of late 1906 and early 1907, Bai Yi attempted to explain the recent rise in the number of bad elements (*youmin*) in late Qing society. Although he first offered the more familiar explanation that "the nurturing and education of the people (*jiaoyang*) had gone awry," he then put forward several more specific sociological reasons. The first was the recent dismissal of Hunanese soldiers who had been conscripted into the Jiangsu and Hubei armies after the Boxer Rebellion. Unemployed, these ex-soldiers "idled in river and coastal regions. In the north they cooperated with the Great Sword Society (*Dadao hui*), in the south-east with the salt smugglers and secret societies, and in the south with the Three Points Society (*Sandian hui*, *Sanhe hui*). They wandered without returning to their native provinces, struggling to secure their food and clothing by looting, robbing, and kidnapping."²⁴

Providing insights into the life of such wanderers (*liumin*), Bai Yi detailed how those soldiers who returned to Hunan found they could no longer make a life for themselves. "They found there was no land to till, no mountains to excavate, no labor to engage in, no houses to live in, and no boats to pull. They therefore returned to their native villages and relied on their relatives for housing, clothing, and food." The money they had left over from gambling, robbing, and kidnapping quickly ran out and their relatives could offer little support since most earned a meager livelihood themselves, cultivating tea, chopping trees,

mining coal, and pulling boats. Unable to “make a living in the village, the ex-soldiers had no choice but to wander about and live miserably at all the ports along the river.” They would gather “together with all kinds of bad elements and follow the markets, wandering from place to place, seeking rice.” In the spring they would follow the tea markets, in the fall the incense market of Heng Mountain or the temple fairs, and in the winter they would wander about searching for work in coal mines. “They migrated in crowds of hundreds of thousands of people, like the great waves of a turbulent sea.” The more devious of these ex-soldiers who were familiar with the ways of officialdom and the police, “became mob leaders upon entering the ranks of the outlaws.”

The second sociological reason for the rise in banditry was the abolition of the examination system, which left vast numbers of individuals with no career options. According to Bai Yi, the situation was particularly severe in the Ping-Li-Liu region because with only 40 percent of the population of Jiangsu Province, this region had three times as many examination candidates. Part of the reason for this was that commerce and the new education were less developed in Hunan (one of the provinces constituting the Ping-Li-Liu border region) than in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, and Jiangxi provinces. “In Jiangsu, for example,” Bai Yi wrote, “only the smallest minority of the population had placed all of their hopes in the examination system, while many others were involved in associations for private school reform (*sishu gailiang hui*), in developing special chemistry and physics curriculums (*lihua zhuanxiu ke*), and in running all kinds of industrial companies.” In contrast, in Hunan and Hubei the lower levels of society were exclusively dependent on careers in the military or in lower office, and the middle level of society and above (*zhongliu yishang*), lacking in commercial skills, also had no occupational route to follow once the examination system was abolished. Fearing that “their bodies would rot away and that they would starve to death in the mountain forests if they continued to lack sustenance, the people of Hunan and Hubei had no choice but to throw themselves into making a living by reckless means.”²⁵

The editorialist Hui also cited sociological phenomena in explaining the reasons for the 1911 Chuansha anti-local self-government uprisings. “When we examine the calamity closely, it is clear that although the uprising was initiated by the Buddhist Vegetarian sects (*sudang*), those who were the most active were the opium smokers and gamblers who lived along the rivers.” Angered by the new reform regulations that restricted their habits, and frustrated because they had lost their old jobs, these individuals “came to despise the self-government deputies as the worst kind of affliction. They therefore provoked disasters in the town of Changren and in the Yugong Temple District [near the county of Nanhui]. The violence then spread over a distance of more than ten *li* to eight or nine highly organized, wealthy towns.”²⁶

The editorialist using the pen name Tian Chi (a mythical sea mentioned in the *Zhuangzi*) explained the 1910 Changsha rice riots in terms of the stages of

economic development, a form of analysis that would have been inconceivable in China several decades earlier. He claimed all societies passed from a nomadic stage to an agricultural stage, followed by an industrial stage, and finally a commercial-industrial stage. In this final stage, all daily necessities could be obtained without having to use one's own body to hoe the land for food. Tian Chi explained that because China had hardly advanced beyond the second agricultural level, its standard of living was falling further and further behind the more "advanced" nations. "Today," he wrote, "the daily income of the citizens of an advanced nation is more than equivalent to the annual income of our people in the hinterland. To compare the two economic levels would be as inappropriate as Emperor Hui's [of the Jin Dynasty, 265–420 C.E.] statement, 'Let them eat meat' in order to satisfy their hunger.²⁷ In today's world, all nations that have developed industry and commerce become powerful. Nations do not become powerful through agriculture."

Tian Chi argued that China's poorly developed transportation infrastructure, which impeded the free flow of grain, was the second factor contributing to the outbreak of the rice riots. He made his argument by referring to both ancient Chinese theory and Western economic practice. "Those who skillfully adopt Ji Ran's [late Zhou] theory do not consider ten million *li* as too great a distance to transport rice in order to trade. Applying this same principle, the great powers are aggressively promoting international trade today." But because Hunan did not have the transportation networks necessary to follow these trade principles, hoarding, famine, and popular protest had ensued.²⁸

Another new factor the reform publicists considered in their analysis of the common people's situation was the influence of the emerging revolutionary forces. Whereas the officials consistently exaggerated the revolutionary role in the rural uprisings as a means of justifying their harsh repression of the disturbances, the new publicists generally underplayed this role in order to criticize the official position. The reality of the revolutionary threat lay somewhere in between these two positions. From 1906 to 1908 there were seven attempts by revolutionaries to overturn the dynasty, five of the seven by the *Tongmeng hui* (Revolutionary Alliance).²⁹ Some of the *Shibao* journalists did recognize the existence of this revolutionary danger which lurked in the midst of rural unrest. "If the thieves in every province are not pacified," an editorialist wrote in 1908, "the revolutionary party (*geming zhi dang*) will disseminate nationalistic propaganda, mobilize the people, and collect money to publish books abroad."³⁰ Another editorialist had warned that as dependence on the dynasty decreased, the more educated people would join revolutionary organizations.³¹

In their actual analyses of specific uprisings, however, the editorialists accused the government of wrongly implicating revolutionary forces, and wrongly deducing revolutionary motivations. Writing on the Changsha rice riots, Xi Song depicted the uprising as a spontaneous event. Its brevity, he claimed, "was proof that it was merely an outburst of violence and not the result of a well reasoned

strategy of opposition to the dynasty. Since there was no precise plan involved, there was definitely no revolutionary party (*gedang*) behind the disturbance.”³² If there had been such a strategy, others would have been mobilized to join the struggle. The riots “would not have been limited to some 100 or even 1,000 urbanites, with everyone ten *li* outside of the city tranquil and unresponsive to the events.”

Xi Song also made an ideological argument against the theory of revolutionary involvement in the Changsha disturbance. He claimed that because the revolutionary party ostensibly adhered to “advanced” ideas, it would not have condoned the violence against churches and schools at the beginning of the uprising, or the attacks on foreigners. “This kind of behavior,” Xi Song wrote, “certainly represents nothing other than mob violence.” He further asserted that young revolutionaries who were, “without exception, wealthy members of the gentry” would never have cooperated with the thugs involved in the disturbances—the “starving hordes and local hoodlums.”³³

Bai Yi went to the most extensive lengths to discredit the official theory of a revolutionary “black hand” as the force behind the 1906 and 1907 Ping-Li-Liu disturbance.³⁴ He claimed that “those bad elements who have become traitors to the dynasty were not necessarily influenced by the revolutionaries.” He further contended that the official strategy of repressing this nonexistent heterodoxy would ultimately backfire. “By emphasizing this new anti-revolutionary policy, the high officials are actually encouraging the outlaws to esteem, worship, and follow the revolutionary path. Exhausted and bereft of the means of survival, the bad elements will be particularly inclined to turn and embrace what officials have pointed to as the way of the revolutionary.”³⁵

Bai Yi offered a detailed argument to refute the government’s interpretation of the uprising, thereby offering insights into the disturbance and the protesters’ possible motivation for rebelling. He concurred with Xi Song’s skeptical view on the involvement of the so-called revolutionary overseas students. He questioned whether these students were truly capable of mobilizing the lowly rioters, and whether the revolutionary leaders’ prestige was sufficient to control the “unruly ruffians.” In addition to these political considerations, Bai Yi also offered material reasons to prove that the rebels were not revolutionaries. For one, their weapons were unsophisticated. “Although some people exaggerated and claimed that the rebels had rifles, in fact they had nothing more than bird-hunting guns, spears, and the like.” And there was no evidence of stockpiled weapons. The rebels also clearly lacked a coherent military strategy and a specific destination. “Would the revolutionary army conduct itself in this way, as if an uprising were mere children’s play?” Bai Yi asked.³⁶

He did, however, concede that the rebels had, at one point, adopted revolutionary slogans, worn revolutionary badges, and flown revolutionary banners.³⁷ “However, their motivation for doing so was not rooted in any revolutionary aspiration.”³⁸ While the rebels “did not truly understand the meaning of revolu-

tion. . . they did understand that revolutionaries were the enemies of officialdom. The members of the lower levels of society were thus convinced that the revolutionaries must share their feelings, their fate, and their daily concerns."³⁹ While some protesters took up the revolutionary banner as a sign of antagonism toward the officials, the young followed suit simply because they were "easily moved by curiosity and excitement," and the "ignorant (*yumin*) because they could be stirred up by a trifling." This did not make them ardent radicals. "Just as those who read *The Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan*) do not immediately become wandering bandits, and those who read *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Honglou meng*) do not instantaneously scale the walls of their neighbor's property and drag away his virgin daughter in order to get a wife, so those who have some curiosity about the new movement will not instantly become committed revolutionaries."⁴⁰

Bai Yi made one further sociological argument against the revolutionaries' involvement in the popular uprising, claiming that the overseas students had no connection to local society. "The students and the old society (*jiu shehui*) are like water and coal which cannot abide one another," he wrote. While the members of the old society accused the students of being traitors (*hanjian*) and followers of Western religion (*yangjiao*), the students criticized members of the old society for their "anti-foreignism and conservatism." Neither were the students linked in any way to "the secret societies of the interior."⁴¹

Rather than blame the revolutionaries for the rural disturbances, the *Shibao* editorialists discussed sociological and infrastructural problems that had led to uprisings, thereby infusing the inherited discourse on popular protest with new elements. They further emphasized that the common people were not only expressing age-old grievances against social and economic abuses. They were also resisting the cultural imperatives that accompanied the new reforms—the disruption of local customs and the destruction of community temples. The journalists' response was not to suppress or ignore these assertions of popular culture, neither was it to yield to them and alter their own course. Continuing to uphold two of the defining features of the constitutionalist program—gradualism and education—they searched for new ways to help the people understand rather than force them to follow.

Cultural Translation and Negotiation

The journalists realized that reform elites did not only impose new programs, new taxes, and new authority on the common people, they also imposed their own cultural norms and hierarchy of values.⁴² Aware of the disjunctions such a process could give rise to and realizing that the New Policies were not always welcomed in the villages, the journalists attempted to bridge the gulf that separated city from countryside by taking the common people's worldview into account. They advocated strategies of interaction which demonstrated their sensitivity to the existence of the villagers' own language, their own forms of

organization, and their own practices.⁴³ Although the late Qing constitutionalists clearly considered their own ideas on citizenry and nationhood to be the most enlightened, and although they were driven to disseminate those ideas throughout society, their efforts are best understood as an antecedent to the “back to the people” movement later in the century, rather than of May Fourth iconoclasm.⁴⁴ Based on principles of cultural negotiation, the method of local reform they advocated was rarely duplicated in the following decades.

This process of cultural negotiation was developed in response to the often fierce popular resistance to the local reform which was undertaken following the announcement of official local self-government regulations in January of 1909.⁴⁵ These disturbances forced the reformists to realize that if they did “not carefully handle the problem of popular ignorance in implementing the reform program, endless complications would arise in the future.” It was necessary, they believed, to first closely examine popular sentiment (*mingqing*) and then to “make the two characters ‘self-government’ penetrate the hearts of the common people (*yiban renmin*).”⁴⁶

This process of making the reform project comprehensible to the common people meant bringing the villagers to a level where they could understand and, ultimately, participate in local reform. Hui advised that those who were responsible for this reform “must first conduct an investigation of the specific circumstances of the common people’s lives. Then, they should establish a strategy of implementation appropriate to those circumstances.” In order to deflect any opposition, “those responsible must first address any concerns on the part of the local people by publicly announcing the rationale for the administrative change.” If a program compatible with local conditions was defined and if the rationale for the reform was clearly explained, then, in Hui’s mind, “there would be less danger of upheaval and the foundation of local self-government could gradually be consolidated.”⁴⁷

By the time Hui wrote these editorials in the spring of 1911, it had become clear that the official and unofficial local self-government research bureaus—which the journalists had supported from 1906 when they were first proposed—had not successfully disseminated knowledge of the new local administration to the lowest levels of society. The journalists were thus forced to reassess their tactics. Recognizing that new-style intellectuals were ineffective as messengers of reform because their rhetoric was foreign and meaningless to the common people, they turned instead to “cultural translators.” These “translators” would mediate between distant social-cultural groups—in this case the new cultural elites and the common people—facilitating the movement of values or beliefs from one group to another, from the city to the countryside.⁴⁸ The journalists, as representatives of one social-cultural group, thus encouraged the officials and gentry, as members of a proximate cultural group, to ask the village elders, members of a more distant group, to mediate in conveying the message of local self-government to the rural people, the most distant group. Hui proposed that

officials or gentry recommend several village elders (*xianglao*) who enjoyed great prestige in the local area but who were not associated in any way with self-government reform. "These individuals would then be asked to go out and promote the concept of local self-government and explain its advantages to the villagers." Hui was convinced that if this method was used, "then despite their ignorance, the common people would stop obstinately holding on to their wrong beliefs. The desire to follow the rebels would disappear, and the ringleaders would all be killed."

Hui advised first waiting until the "great tide" of the disturbances against local self-government had calmed. Then it would be possible to "assign rural elders to go to all towns and rural townships to publicly lecture on the advantages of self-government. In this way the benefits of self-government and the harm of opium and gambling could be explained to the people of every town." Without such mediation, "once there was a setback in implementing local self-government, the common people would become despondent and the enemies of reform would be encouraged to express their opposition."⁴⁹

The reformists' concern that the common people be carefully integrated into the process of local self-government was premised on the belief that the lower levels of self-government were the root of the entire constitutional system just as the common people were the foundation of the nation. In an amendment of the classic *minben* quotation from the *Book of History*, Hui wrote in 1911: "the people are the foundation of the regulation of the nation. If the people have ability, then the foundation of the nation is consolidated."⁵⁰ Hui blamed the Constitutional Commission, responsible for the final revision of the self-government regulations, for privileging the higher levels of subprefecture, department, and county (*ting, zhou, xian*) local self-government over the lower levels of city, town, and rural township (*cheng, zhen, xiang*) local self-government. As a result, "people in society viewed lower level self-government as lowly and mean, and higher level self-government as respectable and lofty. Is this not absurd? I cannot but suspect that those who are establishing the law are ignorant of the basic objective of the constitution."⁵¹

This official policy of privileging the higher over the lower levels of self-government was a manifestation of the political elites' tendency to overlook the concerns of local society in formulating policies that directly affected local life. This phenomenon was particularly pronounced in the lack of appreciation most urban elites showed for the role of popular religion in the countryside. Launching an assault on traditional culture, elites destroyed or converted structures of local cultural significance, such as temples, shrines, and ancestral halls, for use as schools, police bureaus, and self-government offices.⁵² Even if the actual property was not taken over, the reform managers often attempted to extract temple taxes to promote the New Policies.⁵³ An editorialist commenting on a popular attack on schools in Wuxi, Jiangsu, identified this as one of the key reasons for the violence. "Today because [Yang Mu] levied temple contributions in order to

establish the new school, all of his family has been harassed and four or five schools in two cities have been totally destroyed.”⁵⁴

The *Shibao* discourse on the issue of popular religion, however, counters this view of the elites as a monolithic force bent on “assaulting” local culture. As early as 1905, Zhang Jian, an educational reformer who was closely associated with *Shibao*, announced that the integrity of local religious institutions should be respected in the process of implementing the new education.⁵⁵ And in reporting on various local uprisings, the journalists consistently supported the position of the protesters who were demonstrating against the elites’ encroachment on their local sacred space.⁵⁶ In Laiyang, Shandong, in July of 1910, for example, they supported the common people in their protest against the reform elite’s expropriation of the Buddhist temple tax to pay for new schools. And in the March 1911 Chuansha, Jiangsu, uprising, they defended the rioters who opposed the reform elites’ efforts to convert a sect temple into a self-government office, lauding the efforts of the temple manager and widow Ding Fei who led the more than 2,000 people in the four-day disturbance.⁵⁷

The reformists’ efforts to comprehend local society on its own terms and to reach the common people by using a language they could understand belies the commonly held view that the growing divergence between urban intellectuals and the people in the twentieth century was an historical inevitability that began in the late Qing. Despite elitist elements and remnants of a tradition of paternalism in the early twentieth-century reformist discourse, the reform publicists’ plans for a “new cultural design” and their sense of nationalism were much more nuanced and less totalitarian than some critics of late Qing and early Republican elites would suggest.⁵⁸ The reformists’ discourse on the common people was an amalgam of past and present values, a merging of the longstanding ideal of upper-class concern and responsibility, the equally longstanding sense of the scholar’s social and cultural superiority, and new concerns of nationalism and the creation of a Chinese citizenry. The process of cultural negotiation that resulted from the infusion of these new elements into the Confucian discourse on the people had barely begun when the 1911 Revolution erupted. It has been reinitiated several times in subsequent decades, to little effect, and it has been virtually arrested in China today.

Notes

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1. One hundred and thirteen resistance struggles were counted in 1909 and 285 in 1910, with ninety of them concentrated in the lower Yangzi Valley. Out of the forty-eight tax protests which were counted between 1903 and 1910, twenty-two of them occurred in 1910. Roxanne Praziak, “Community Protest in Rural China: Tax Resistance and County-Village Politics on the Eve of the 1911 Revolution” (Ph. D. diss., University of

California, Davis, 1981), pp. 114, 119. Wang Shuhuai lists thirty-two incidents in 1910, and five in 1911 in Jiangsu Province alone. Wang Shuhuai, "Qingmo Jiangsu difang zizhi fengchao" (Local self-government disturbances in Jiangsu in the late Qing), *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjuisuo jikan* 6 (1977): pp 319–320. Kathryn Bernhardt records twenty-five collective actions in northern Zhejiang between 1902 and the winter of 1911–1912. Most of these actions were in protest over the exactions for the New Policy reforms, as were thirty-eight of the fifty-one incidents in Jiangnan in this period. Kathryn Bernhardt, *Rents, Taxes, and Peasant Resistance: The Lower Yangzi Region, 1840–1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 158.

2. Cheng Wah-kwan describes the reformer as a redemptive personality, viewing it as his sacred mission to restore the people to history. Cheng Wah-kwan, "Vox Populi: Language, Literature, and Ideology in Modern China" (Ph. D. Diss., University of Chicago, 1989), p. 74.

3. On the contradictions inherent in the role of an educated elite, see Anthony J. La Vopa, "Conceiving a Public: Ideas and Society in Eighteenth Century Europe," *Journal of Modern History* 64 (March 1992): 79–116.

4. Wang Shuhuai, p. 322.

5. Bai Yi, "Zhuilun Ping-Li-Liu luanshi" (Discussion of the disorder in Ping-Li-Liu), *Shibao*, April 8, 1907.

6 Hui, "Jingtiancidi zhi zizhi guan" (Autonomy is beset by difficulties), *Shibao*, March 6, 1911.

7. "Lun Danyang minbian dang yancheng jibian zhi guanli" (The officials who incited the Danyang rebellion should be severely punished), *Shibao*, August 28, 1909.

8. Xi Song (Li Yuerui), "Jinggao Xiangzhe dali" (Announcement to Hunan's high officials), *Shibao*, April 19, 1910.

9. Xi Song, "Lun Xiangsheng nianglun zhi guanshen ji ying chedi yancha" (The officials and gentry who fostered the uprising in Hunan must be thoroughly investigated), *Shibao*, May 4, 1910.

10. See, for example, Bai Yi, April 8, 1907.

11. Bai Yi, April 14, 1907.

12. Don C. Price, "Reformers, Revolutionaries and Secret Societies: Proto-populism among the Late Qing Elite," paper presented at the Association for Asian Studies annual meeting, 1992, pp. 1–4.

13. Bai Yi, "Ping-Li-Liu," April 11, 1907. The Hong Bang, also known as Hongmen Jiao, Tiandi Hui (the Association of Heaven and Earth), Sandian Hui (Three Points Society), and Sanhe Hui (Triad Society), was one of the Qing dynasty popular secret societies which had as its objective the overthrow of the Qing and the reinstitution of the Ming dynasty. Tan Zongying, ed., *Zhongguo jindaishi cidian* (Dictionary of modern Chinese history) (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1982), 68.

14. Di Baoxian and Chen Leng had joined Tang Caichang's Independent Army uprising in 1900. A signatory of Kang Youwei's 1895 petition, and a fugitive in Japan after the 1898 coup, Di Baoxian returned to Shanghai in 1900 to join Tang Caichang in organizing a series of revolts in support of the restoration of the Guangxu Emperor. Di was also involved with Tang Caichang in the organization of the *Zhongguo duli xiehui* (Chinese Independent Association) in Shanghai, which planned to link up with secret societies in order to carry out a large-scale military operation in Beijing. After Beijing was occupied by foreign forces during the Boxer Rebellion, Di united the literati who had escaped to Shanghai from the provinces and organized the *Guohui* (National Assembly) with Tang, Rong Hong, and Yan Fu. This organization planned to use Hankou, where it stocked arms, as its base of opposition to the capital. Information was leaked to Governor General Zhang Zhidong, however, and Tang Caichang and fifteen to twenty others were

assassinated. Ge Gongzhen, *Zhongguo baoxue shi* (History of the Chinese press) (Beijing: Zhongguo xinwen chubanshe, 1985), pp. 117–118; Fang Hanqi, *Zhongguo jindai baokan shi* (A history of the modern Chinese press), 2 vols. (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe), p. 274; Hu Daojing, “Shanghai de ribao” (Chinese daily newspapers), in *Zhongguo jindai baokan fazhan gaikuang* (A survey of the development of the modern Chinese press), ed. Yang Guanghui (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 1986), p. 335; Douglas R. Reynolds, “Training Young China Hands: Tōa Dōbun Shoin and Its Precursors, 1886–1945,” in *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895–1937*, ed. P. Duus, R.H. Myers, and M.R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 231n. Also see Tang Zhijun, ed., *Jindai Shanghai dashiji* (A record of important events in the modern history of Shanghai), (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1989): p. 552.

15. Bai Yi, April 11, 1907.
16. “Lun gesheng zhidao zhi qingzhuang feixing difang zhidu buneng pingjing” (If every province does not implement a local system then they will not be able to control the problem of thieves and establish peace and order), *Shibao*, December 12, 1908. This comment on the police applies to the particular region the journalist was familiar with, most probably Jiangsu province, not to the whole nation. In some areas the local police force was strengthened, in others it was not.
17. Bai Yi, April 8, 1907.
18. “Lun gesheng,” December 14, 1908.
19. “Shandong lüjing tongxianghui,” (Shandong Landsmann’s Association), pp. 26–27, cited in Prazniak, “Community Protest,” p. 281.
20. “Shanghai Daotai’s Report,” *Shibao*, April 11, 1911 as cited in *ibid.*, pp. 279–81.
21. For example, Wang Zhixun, the editor of the *Jinan Daily*, did a personal investigation of the 1910 Laiyang uprising in Shandong Province, stressing the reasonableness and respectability of the demands of Qu Shiwen, the local headmen (*shezhang*) and his partisans. His report provided members of the Shandong Provincial Assembly, to which Wang also belonged, with access to detailed coverage of the case, moving them towards the view that the protesters had legitimate grievances and demands. See Roxanne Prazniak, “Tax Protest at Laiyang, Shandong, 1910: Commoner Organization Versus the County Political Elite,” *Modern China* 6:1 (January 1980), p. 66.
22. Xi Song, “Jinggao Xiangzhe.”
23. The classical theory of the people as the foundation of the nation (*minben sixiang*), an element in all of the Thirteen Classics and expounded upon in the Confucian *Analects*, states that the key to genuine leadership is the manifestation of virtues which benefit the people. Mencius (371–289 B.C.E.), who became one of the greatest theoreticians of *minben* thought, emphasized the ruler’s responsibility in tending to the welfare of the people as a means of ensuring stability and prosperity in the polity. For a discussion of this aspect of the *Analects* see Wm. Theodore de Bary, *The Trouble with Confucianism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 29.
24. This problem of disbanded soldiers as a disruptive social group had become particularly acute after the Taiping Rebellion.
25. Bai Yi, April 10, 1907.
26. Hui, “Jingtiancidi.”
27. The complete translation referred to is: “All under heaven is in a state of devastation and upheaval. The common people (*baixing*) are starving to death, and the emperor asked, ‘Why do they not eat meat?’ ” Recorded in the Emperor Hui section of the *Jin shu* (The history of the Jin dynasty) compiled during the Tang dynasty. The parallel with Marie Antoinette’s statement of “Let them eat cake” is striking.
28. Tian Chi, “Xiangluan shanhou chuyan” (My humble opinion on the Hunan uprising), *Shibao*, May 6, 7, 1910. Ji Ran lived between the Spring and Autumn and Warring

State periods. He was responsible for the policy of selling grain at low prices (*pingtiao*) in order to stabilize the price of rice and consequently protect against disaster and develop trade.

29. John Fincher, *Chinese Democracy* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1981), p. 94. In early July 1907 the government made mass arrests in the wake of Xu Xilin's attempted assassination of the governor of Anhui, and in late July Qiu Jin, who was eventually executed, was arrested for her role in plotting an uprising in Shaoxing.

30. "Lun gesheng," December 12, 1908.

31. "Lun renmin yilai chaoting zhi xin jinri jianjian" (The people's dependency on the dynasty is gradually being reduced), *Shibao*, October 19, 1904.

32. Xi Song, "Jianggao Xiangzhe."

33. Xi Song, "Xianglun weiyian" (Warning concerning the Hunan uprising), *Shibao*, April 21, 1910.

34. In the case of the 1906 and 1907 Ping-Li-Liu uprising, revolutionary students were actually complicit in the events. In the spring of 1906, the *Tongmeng hui* sent members Liu Daoyi and Cai Zhaonan to Hunan to make connections with secret societies and to plan an uprising for the end of the year. While Liu went to Changsha, Hunan, Cai went to Ping county in Jiangxi, where he established connections in the region of Liuyang and Liling. The two radicals made their presence felt in the area and when the uprising took place, one of the secret society armies in the field had accepted an alliance with republicanism. This force used the characters for *geming* or revolution on its recognition badges and *Geming jun* (Revolutionary Army) on its banners. Also, a radical manifesto issued in the name of a secret society chief involved in the uprising incorporated much of the *Tongmeng hui* program. Yang Liqiang, ed., *Jianming Zhongguo mingguoshi xidian* (Simplified dictionary of Chinese republican history) (Henan: Henan Peoples' Publishing House, 1989), pp. 451–452. See also John Lust, "Secret Societies, Popular Movements, and the 1911 Revolution," in *Popular Movements and Secret Societies in China, 1840–1950*, ed. Jean Chesnaux (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 178. For a contemporary account of the uprising see Chen Chunsheng, "Ping-Li ziyi ji" (A record of the Ping-Li uprising), in *Zhongguo jindaishi ziliao congkan, Xinhai geming II* (Collection of Materials on Modern Chinese History, 1911 Revolution II), ed. Zhongguo jindaishi xuehui (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1981), pp. 463–498. Joseph Esherik argues that although the students' role was less instrumental than contemporary official reaction or subsequent Chinese Communist historiography would suggest, they did serve as catalysts in a popular uprising that was, in fact, responding to its own internal dynamic. *Reform and Revolution in China: The 1911 Revolution in Hunan and Hubei* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 59.

35. Bai Yi, April 15, 1907.

36. Bai Yi, April 13, 1907.

37. On these phenomena, see Lust, "Secret Societies," p. 178.

38. Bai Yi, April 13, 1907.

39. Bai Yi, April 11, 1907.

40. *Shuihu zhuan* (The water margin or All men are brothers) is a popular Ming novel probably written by Shi Naian. *Honglou meng* (Dream of the red chamber), one of the greatest Chinese novels, was authored by Cao Xueqin of the Qing dynasty. The reference to "[dragging] away his virgin daughter" comes from the *Mencius*, 424, bk. VI, pt. II, ch. II. The full quotation is, "If by getting over your neighbor's wall, and dragging away his virgin daughter, you can get a wife, while if you do not do so, you will not be able to get a wife, will you so drag her away?"

41. Bai Yi, April 11, 1907.

42. Eugen Weber describes this process as the city or state carrying its values to the

countryside. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), pp. 241–277.

43. Korinna Hana-Richter discusses a similar strategy in her paper “A Plebian Public? The *Pingmin* as the New Target Group of Chinese Intellectuals in Early 20th Century China,” presented at the Conference on Civil Society in East Asia, Montreal, Canada, October 1992.

44. In a recent study, Taiwan scholar Li Hsiao-t’i compares what he calls the late Qing “enlightenment movement” to the populist movement in Russia in the 1860s. Li Hsiao-t’i, *Qingmo de xiaceng shehui qimeng yundong, 1901–1911* (Lower class enlightenment in the late Qing period, 1901–1911), (Taibei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, Jindaishi yanjiusuo, 1992), pp. 223–225.

45. In Jiangsu Province alone, thirty-two anti-local self-government incidents were documented for the year 1910. Wang Shuhuai, pp. 319–320.

46. Hui, “Jingtiancidi,” March 6, 1911.

47. Hui, “Lun shixing lixianzheng yi zhuyi xiaji difang zizhi” (Low-level local self-government must be emphasized in implementing constitutionalism), *Shibao*, May 1, 1911.

48. On the concept of cultural translation, see David Johnson, “Communication, Class, and Consciousness,” in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 71.

49. Hui, “Jingtiancidi,” March 6, 1911.

50. Hui, “Lun shixing.”

51. Hui, “Du chengzhenxiang difang zizhi zhangcheng diyibaiqishitiao hou” (After reading the first 170 articles of the city, town, and rural township self-government regulations), *Shibao*, August 10, 1911.

52. See, for example, Myron, L. Cohen, “Being Chinese: The Peripheralization of Traditional Identity,” *Daedalus* (1991), p. 130; Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China, 1900–1942* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 148–157, 245–257.

53. Roxanne Praziak, “Community Protest,” pp. 269–273.

54. “Wuxi huixue hou zhi yulun” (Public opinion after the destruction of schools in Wuxi), *Shibao*, August 24, 1904.

55. Wang Shuhuai, p. 325.

56. See for example Tian Chi, “Lun Laiyang minbian shi” (The Laiyang uprising), *Shibao*, August 10, 1910; Xi Song, “Chuansha luanshi ganyan” (Impressions of the Chuansha uprising), *Shibao*, March 11, 1911; Hui, “Lun Chuansha naoshi’an zhi jieguo” (The result of the Chuansha disturbance), *Shibao*, June 11, 1911.

57. *Shibao*, March 9, 1911.

58. For such a critique, see Cohen, “Chinese.”

Local Self-Government: Citizenship Consciousness and the Political Participation of the New Gentry-Merchants in the Late Qing

Ma Xiaoquan

According to contemporary theories of political development, certain forms of local autonomy are an important requirement for political modernization.¹ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in China, the newly emerging bourgeoisie formed two movements aiming at political renovation: the revolutionaries and the constitutionalists. Yet both groups shared the goal of transforming the traditional system of autocratic monarchism and turning China onto the road of modern, democratic nations. The bourgeoisie, with the new gentry-merchants at its core, wanted to establish the political system of “local self-government” (*difang zizhi*) as a way to save the age and transform the system. This was also the first attempt to modernize local government in China.

Local self-government in the late Qing possessed two basic characteristics. First, following the corruption of Qing politics and the worsening of the national crisis, the newly emerging bourgeoisie advocated emulating the democratic system of the capitalist nations of the West, reforming the traditional political structure, and striving for Chinese independence and strength. They clearly supported plans for local self-government and strove mightily to put them into practice. The rise of local self-government in the late Qing was therefore a product of the development of national capitalism and a manifestation of the “political attainment” of citizenship consciousness and political participation. Second, owing to the decline of central power and the ossification of the bureaucracy in the late

Qing, as well as the disintegration of basic political authority at the local level and the constantly increasing severity of social instability, the feudal ruling class wanted the government to adopt local self-government policies. This way, the feudal forces could strengthen their control over society and stabilize the political base of imperial authority.

The local self-government movement of the late Qing was also characterized by local consciousness and influences since it emerged out of the mutual interaction of society and government. This essay explores how the bourgeoisie, with the new gentry-merchants at its core, developed citizenship consciousness and began to participate in politics over the course of the local self-government movement.

Intellectual Support for Local Self-Government to 1905

Local Institutions in China and the West

“Local self-government” in its contemporary sense is a product of the political culture and historical conditions of Western capitalism. Local self-government in Europe and America originated in the “citizen government” of the classical and medieval eras. Following the rise in the forces of production and the development of the social division of labor in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, commercial cities gradually developed in the territories possessed by the church and feudal lords. For their own survival and development, urban residents began to free themselves from the power struggles of the feudal lords. They formed a new urban organ of self-government—the “commune”—based partly on the old German *Markgenossenschaft*. They took all sorts of paths toward different degrees of independence and self-government, and some developed to the point of independent city-republics. Although urban self-government in Western Europe was never entirely able to cast off every feudal attribute, the lengthy period of “citizen government” formed the intellectual and organizational basis on which modern local self-government systems could be erected.

Capitalism began to expand by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, following the growth of the commercial economy in Western Europe. The new bourgeoisie steadily mounted the political stage, opening the struggle against autocratic monarchism. In the eighteenth century, owing to the propagation of more democratic thought and the revolution in production, the bourgeoisie of various European nations assumed commanding economic positions and were then able to seek political equality. Their goals were to protect their economic privileges and safeguard the system of local self-government which gave them political rights. After the bourgeoisie gained political control nationwide, they improved the system of local self-government.

With the success of the bourgeois revolution across Western Europe, the principles of the separation of powers resulted in the spread of local assemblies

and administrative organs, electoral systems, and local self-government within the scope of constitutional procedures. After 1835 Britain promulgated self-government regulations for various levels of government, dividing the nation into counties, towns, and rural districts, each with its own representative body and administrative organs. Britain thus practiced complete self-government. After the Revolution of 1789, France divided the nation into provinces, departments, counties, and towns, each with its local electoral system. France underwent two political setbacks, but during the Third Republic it steadily promulgated various laws to establish an electoral system and expand self-government authority at every level of local government. Prussia was divided into provinces, counties, and prefectures, and after Germany was unified in 1812 local government was reformed several times to expand the scope of local self-government, establish judicial oversight, and strengthen the political capacity of the people.²

The self-government systems of the Western European nations had an extensive influence on other capitalist nations in Europe and the Americas and on Japan. The local system of the United States was influenced by Britain while that of Japan was influenced by Germany. Japan's political tradition was similar to China's, but the Meiji Restoration of 1868 reformed its political structure. In 1888 it instituted a system of cities, towns, and villages and in 1890 a system of districts, counties, and prefectures. Cities, towns, and villages were given the lowest level of self-government, prefectures a middle level of self-government, and districts and counties the highest level of self-government. At every level self-government was divided between the legislative, with a representative body, and the administrative, with an executive body, both elected.³ Still, self-government in Meiji Japan was completely in accord with the spirit of the imperial constitution. It operated under the restrictions and control of the central bureaucrats. "The limits on self-government are determined by the laws, and they cannot do as they will."⁴

In China, a long history of feudal-monarchical autocracy as well as a deep tradition of centralization led to the total lack of local self-government in thought and reality. In the late Qing a completely different attitude arose, but, until then, local government during the Qing was marked by two basic features. First, localities were obviously subject to the center. Officials at every level were appointed by the court; their duties were vague and overlapping. All important military and governmental plans depended on the emperor's will. This concentration of powers not only was extreme during the successive periods of Chinese history but also flourished to an extent rarely found among other nations. Second, local government consisted of the "two-track politics" of officials and gentry acting together. From the capital to the most distant provinces, every single matter was determined by orders from the court to the officials, yet as China's borders expanded and the population grew, much naturally remained beyond the court's purview. Local administration generally stopped at the level of the department and county during the Qing. Basic society at the level below the coun-

ties was therefore controlled by gentry, who built a gentry politics outside of the state. This is what the famous sociologist Fei Xiaotong called the “invisible organization” stemming from the bottom toward the top of society.⁵ This kind of gentry politics grew gradually after the Qin dynasty (221–206 B.C.) to become the system of township officials (*xiangguan*).

The traditional township system was somewhat like the modern local self-government system in its form and functions. In the late Qing a large number of people thus thought that “China doesn’t call it ‘local self-government’ but the system exists in reality.”⁶ In fact, the township system of China and the local self-government system of the West were completely different. First, although the township officials in the past were produced by “elections” (*xuanju*), these were hardly democratic elections expressing the will of the people; rather, they were selected and ratified by officialdom. Second, township officials lacked the independent administrative powers to decide local matters; rather, they only supplemented the bureaucracy.⁷ Third, gentry politics was the product of the political culture of feudal despotism. Although the traditional political culture recognized the political importance of the people with such phrases as “the people are the basis of the state” and “the people are important but the ruler is unimportant,” nonetheless the ideology of the people as the basis of the state at best acted only to restrain the vast imperial powers. It could not produce democratic ideologies along the lines of “sovereignty resides in the people” and “government stems from the people.”

We can see from the above that the spirit and nature of local government in the West were completely different from that in China. The notion of local self-government based on bourgeois democracy in the late Qing did not develop naturally out of traditional political culture. Rather, it resulted from the intellectual and organizational influence of Western bourgeois democracy.

The Introduction of Ideas about Local Self-Government to 1905

Chinese began to gain an understanding of Western democracy at the time of the Opium War. The invasion of China by outside forces and the corruption of the court provoked a few members of the landlord class to open their eyes to the world. They translated and compiled a number of geographical treatises which offered a preliminary introduction to the local government systems of Britain, the United States, and other countries. These writings were quite superficial, but in ways previously impossible they greatly influenced a Chinese society which had for so long firmly shut out the rest of the world. After the 1860s foreign contacts grew constantly. Ambassadors and embassy officials wrote large numbers of diaries and travel accounts describing the local assemblies and self-government systems of the Western nations.⁸ However, these descriptions were mostly perfunctory and shallow reactions of the landlord class and intellectuals

who had not yet formed a systematic and lucid understanding of the West. It was the early reformist thinkers of the period from 1860 to 1890 who seriously thought through questions about government and offered concrete suggestions.

In his famous reformist work of the 1860s, "Straightforward Words from the Lodge of Early Zhou Studies," Feng Guifen advocated that localities be separately governed and that local officials be "elected by the masses" (*youzhong gongjue*). Feng felt that the ruler should rule cooperatively and by delegating powers:

The emperor cannot rule the empire alone, and so he delegates power to the great ministers. A great minister cannot rule a province alone, and so he delegates power to the prefectural magistrates. A prefectural magistrate cannot rule the prefecture alone, and so he delegates power to the county magistrates. A county magistrate cannot rule a county alone, and so he delegates power to the various lower officials.⁹

Feng advocated a return to the local system of ancient times, in which local officials at the county level and below would be selected by "public elections" and "alternate every three years." Feng's recommendations amounted to a criticism of feudal local bureaucratism. They served as an initial call of the early reformist movement, but few agreed with him since China then lacked a social base capable of response.

From the 1870s to the 1890s, following the gradual disintegration of the natural feudal economy and the initial upsurge of national capitalism, a group of reformers became intrigued by Western democracy. They began to examine China's traditional local government and clearly advocated local self-government. Zheng Guanying, Wang Tao, Xue Fucheng, Ma Jianzhong, Tang Zhen, He Qi, Hu Liyuan, Chen Qiu, Chen Chi, and others were important early reformers. They recommended two main ideas:

1. *The establishment of local assemblies.* Zheng Guanying was the first to advocate a parliament. In his "Warnings to a Prosperous Age" he stated that in the West, "the origins of order and the roots of wealth and strength lay not so much in warships and artillery as in the capacity of parliaments to unite the high and low." If China wanted self-strengthening, "it first needed to establish a parliament to reach popular sentiment, and then it could expand the might of the nation and prevent foreign humiliation."¹⁰ However, he did not have much to say about the establishment of local assemblies. It was the Zhejiang native Chen Qiu who clearly advocated the establishment of local assemblies. In his "General Discussion of Order," he said that the assemblies in Western nations acted to unite the sentiments of high and low, but because their political systems were complex, it would be hard for China to follow them. "We should change our institutions and order every province and district to establish an assembly," he wrote. "To reform the state and the localities, within five days officials should make suggestions according to their circumstances. . . . We may then select the best suggestions and put them into practice."¹¹ At the same time Tang Zhen also

advocated “selecting methods from the West and adapting them [to Chinese conditions].” Aside from a central parliament including high and low, “the affairs of the provinces, departments, prefectures, and counties should be discussed; from the great gentry to the examination candidates, all should join the discussions.”¹² He would thus allow political participation by all local scholars and gentry.

2. *Public selection of township officials (xiangguan)*. At the same time as the early reformers were advocating assemblies, they also advocated elections for representatives and township officials. Zheng Guanying urged that “China’s system of selecting township and village officials should use the Western system of casting ballots in public elections in order to choose talented representatives.”¹³ Chen Chi was even more definite on the subject. He finished his *Commonplace Writings*, a book of one hundred sections, before the Sino-Japanese War of 1895. His section on township officials proposed that “every prefecture and county should institute the Western system of assemblies. Township officials should be elected by the common people.” Every township would elect two people, one regular and one alternate, at least thirty years old and with property worth a thousand in gold. Officials would post notices to urge the people to vote, and they would place voting boxes by the roads; voting would last three months, at which point the man with the most votes would be elected. The term of office would be two years, followed by new elections. “When a district has major political questions, [the elected leaders] will assemble to consult about them. They will delegate and carry out the tasks of nourishing the people and establishing the teachings, promoting good things and abolishing evil ones, resulting in benefit to the state and the people alike.” Chen considered that a system of township and village elections would allow the state to find good leaders and enable the people to seek their happiness. In order to raise up the nation and benefit the people, therefore, “one must start with the establishment of township officials.”¹⁴

It should be clear from the above that these ideas about local self-government in the late Qing were derived from the local self-government systems of the Western capitalist nations and their positive introduction by some of the early reformers. Ever since the Opium War of 1840, a group of landlord reformers, as well as envoys and their followers, continued unceasingly to introduce the local self-government systems of the West. By the 1890s a group of early reformers—in the process of becoming bourgeois instead of landlord intellectuals—emerged out of the statecraft school to criticize China’s bureaucratic political system. They urged that China learn from Western local government systems, establish assemblies, and elect township officials. However, their knowledge and ideas were still extremely limited. Their goal in establishing assemblies was to erase the gap between the ruler and the people or “to unite the high and the low,” and their purpose in electing township officials was to gain the support of the people or stabilize popular sentiment. As Zheng Guanying concluded, “To strengthen

the country, nothing is more important than gaining the people's support; to gain the people's support, nothing is more important than reaching down to popular sentiment; to reach down to popular sentiment, nothing is more important than establishing assemblies." His goal was to create "harmony between ruler and people, their amity deep."¹⁵ Obviously this attitude did not transcend the scope of traditional "people as root" (*minben*) thought and failed to approach the West's parliamentary and self-government systems based on democratic notions.

Nurturing Self-Government Programs in the Era of the 1898 Reforms

The Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95 had a major impact on modernization. The war forced the government's "Western affairs self-strengthening movement" to declare bankruptcy, and the national crisis deepened. At the same time, following the preliminary development of national capitalism, the political representatives of the new bourgeoisie began to mount the political stage. They examined the painful lessons of the defeat of the great Chinese Empire by the small Asian country of Japan, determining that the self-strengthening movement would never be able to save the nation from perishing and that the reasons for China's weakness lay in the corruption of autocratic government. They therefore advocated that China emulate Western political systems to reform Chinese politics. While offering plans to create a constitutional monarchy, they were also advancing discussion about local government, thus fostering clearer ideas about local self-government reforms.

Not long after the Sino-Japanese War had exploded, such early reformers as He Qi and Hu Liyuan presented a more sophisticated explanation of local self-government. In criticizing the basis of traditional bureaucratic politics, they urged that assemblies be established at the provincial, prefectural, and county levels, and that each assembly have sixty members. County assemblymen would be elected from among *xiucai*, prefectural assemblymen from among *juren*, and provincial assemblymen from among *jinshi*. All educated, refined males over the age of twenty would be given the "right of suffrage" (*gongju zhi quan*). He and Hu also outlined the responsibilities of assemblymen and the powers of the assemblies:

Assemblymen will apply their knowledge to government, thus helping to solve the problems of the people and nourishing harmony among them. The good of the locality and the preferences of popular sentiment all will be expressed by the assemblymen to the officials. The reforms which officials want should be discussed with the assemblymen, and what the assemblymen want should be discussed with the officials. Everything should be done through the expression of opinion, and after the officials and assemblymen agree, then they can decide on the matter. . . . If agreement cannot be reached on a certain matter, then how many approve and disapprove should be determined and the matter arranged according to the greater part. This is called following the majority.¹⁶

This obviously represents a deeper understanding of local government than anything before the war. He and Hu not only spoke of the “right of suffrage” but they also enlarged the scope of voting participation and urged that proposals be settled by “following the majority,” thus giving local assemblies the right to plan local political affairs.

The loss to Japan shocked the court and politically aware literati alike. Such resolute bourgeois reformers as Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong, and Yan Fu publicly promoted popular power (or “democracy,” *minquan*), urged institutional reform (*bianfa*), and created the reform movement of 1898 to change the traditional autocratic system. Their reformist writings included a great many ideas and recommendations on reforming local government.

Liang was one of the leaders of the reform movement of 1898. He had been a teacher at the School of Contemporary Affairs (Shiwu xuetang) in Changsha and had founded the Southern Study Society (Nanxuehui) with Hunanese reformers to “promote practical learning, to arouse literal opinion, and to perfect local self-government institutions.”¹⁷ In his 1898 essay “What Should Be Done in Hunan,” Liang focused on the growing imperialist threat to partition China and urged that Hunan should accomplish various tasks after it had protected itself and become autonomous. Liang’s proposals included extending popular rights, emphasizing the rights of localities, and cultivating the political capacities of the people. “If we want to reform thoroughly, we need to start with uniting the sentiments of the high and the low; if we want to unite the sentiments of the high and the low, we need to turn to ancient concepts, select Western methods, and emphasize the rights of localities.”

Liang argued for two approaches to institutionalize local rights: enlightening the gentry and demarcating their powers. How would the gentry be enlightened? Liang urged that their characters and abilities be cultivated in academies. Every prefecture and county should recommend “gentry and scholars of upright moral character and possessing talent and intelligence” to gather at the Southern Study Society. The society would establish periods of discussion and academic work. The practicality of all reform proposals would be discussed. “After studying every day and conducting business every day for a year, the Society’s men will be able to assume most of the assemblymen positions.” How would their powers be demarcated? Liang argued that China should follow the Western model and separate legislative from administrative functions. Assemblymen would have the right to pass laws but not to carry them out, while administrators would have the right to carry them out but not to pass them. In this way, “once the gentry were enlightened and limits set on their power” all of the intelligence and talent in the entire province would be devoted to “seeking to carry out the affairs of the province, to rid the province of harm, and to ward off difficulties that might beset the province so that every problem would have a solution.”¹⁸

After the defeat of the reform movement, Liang was all the more concerned with the establishment of local government. Comparing Chinese and Western

local institutions, Liang concluded that local self-government systems in the West were uniform. Following the same set pattern, they could ordinarily work together in the same spirit and formed a single system; dispersed into hundreds of pieces, they combined into one body. However, "China is different. Its institutions are incompatible and localities do not share the same interests. Therefore, China is divided, its spirit dissipated, and its strength weakened so that when it tries to protect itself it wastes its strength and gains little." Liang thus emphasized: "If we seek to strengthen the state, we must start by unifying the strengths of each person in the whole realm to do what he ought to do. Local self-government is thus the natural outcome of the people's lives."¹⁹

Tan Sitong also played a leading role in the 1898 reforms. In the *Hunan Journal* (Xiangbao) of April 1898 he advocated that academies be extensively built. He urged that every province should have one central academy while prefectures and counties built branch academies which would be led by local scholars. The role of academies would be such that:

When an official wished to raise a certain matter or reform learning, he would first discuss it with the people in the academy. After they reached agreement, they would carry it out. If they couldn't reach agreement, they would follow the wishes of the majority. If the people wished to raise a certain matter or reform learning, they would first go to a branch academy, then from there to the central academy, where the matter would be resolved. . . . When there are great affairs on which the high and the low are agreed, the entire group will work as a team to accomplish them.²⁰

Tan considered that establishing such academies would create "unity of sentiment" (*tongqing*) and "equality" (*pingquan*), and that academies would also foster talent, formulate laws, manage the economy, and even enlarge group strength (*qunxue*). Such academies would not be normal social organizations but rather constitute local assemblies possessing certain kinds of political powers. In Tan's own words, the academies "would not be called assemblies but they would in fact be assemblies."²¹

Yan Fu was a well-known reformer of the 1898 period. Examining the worsening national crisis, he had published numerous important political essays urging that China learn from the West. After the 1898 coup d'état he worked on translating famous Western works, and he introduced Western bourgeois culture in a fairly systematic manner. His early reformism included support for local self-government. Before the 1898 reform movement, Yan wrote "On Strength" (*Yuanqiang*), which pointed out that the wealth and power of the West basically lay in "benefiting the people" (*limin*).

For policies to benefit the people, they must start with the capacity of each person to benefit himself. The capacity for each person to benefit himself must start with the people obtaining self-determination (*zizyou*). For policies to let

the people obtain self-determination, it is particularly incumbent that they start with the capacity of each person for self-rule (*zizhi*). Otherwise, chaos will follow. Moreover, the strength, wisdom, and virtue of people who can practice self-rule and self-determination are truly exceptional. Therefore, the crucial policies for today can be summarized as fostering the people's strength; expanding the people's knowledge; and renewing the people's virtue.²²

After the defeat of the 1898 reforms, Yan recognized that "Since ancient times, China has never possessed the institutions of self-government. . . . This kind of government has long left China corrupt."²³ In his translation of Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*, Yan clearly pointed out that although representative institutions to strengthen China could not be immediately created, the establishment of local self-government "must not be delayed a single day."²⁴

Aside from the men mentioned above, Huang Zunxian, a leading reformer in Hunan during the 1898 period, was also an enthusiastic proponent of local self-government. Huang served the Qing in the area of foreign affairs. He was an ambassador to Japan, the United States, Great Britain, and other countries. In his comparison of the political institutions of Britain and the United States, he concluded that the Chinese national polity "must follow the joint monarch-populace rule (*junmin gongzhu*) of Britain."²⁵ Huang spoke at the inaugural meeting of the Southern Study Society in February 1898. He attacked bureaucratic government and appealed for scholars and gentry to "govern themselves and to govern their districts," urging them to "promote benefits, remove venality, reform the schools, plan irrigation works, advance commerce, improve agriculture, aid industry, be more diligent in policing, regard disturbances of the teachings and disasters as a family misfortune, regard the formation of criminal gangs as a personal concern, make plans before problems arise, and get prepared at the proper time—these are the affairs of all our scholars." Huang wrote:

If they can do this, then officials and the people, above and below, will find themselves in agreement and combine their strength and obtain the advantages of planning together. . . . To get the advantages of a feudalism of great families while avoiding local abuses of power, the good government of republicanism can be extended from prefectures and counties to provinces and from provinces to the empire, until we are set on the flourishing path toward Utopia.²⁶

Huang continued to support constitutional monarchism and local self-government until about 1905. Moreover, Huang influenced Liang through the numerous letters they exchanged.

In sum, ideas about local self-government were more developed in the 1898 reform era than before the Sino-Japanese War. First, the bourgeois reformers linked local self-government to the central task of the times: strengthening the nation. They thought that in order to solve the national crisis and make China strong and wealthy, it was necessary to start by putting local self-government

into effect and then extending local self-defense and independence to the whole nation. Second, the bourgeois reformers linked local self-government to the demands of the reform movement to expand popular power. They thought that in order to expand democracy it was necessary first to expand the powers of the gentry, and that the best way to do this was to institute local self-government. The concept of local self-government in the late Qing thus came to encompass bourgeois democracy. It reflected what the newly arisen bourgeoisie wanted, and it also established the foundation for the formation and development of the local self-government movement of the early twentieth century.

The Rise of Local Self-Government Ideas in the Early Twentieth Century

Chinese society was greatly disturbed at the beginning of the twentieth century, dissolving and reorganizing. On the one hand, under the guise of “preserving China” (the so-called open door), imperialism opened a fierce rights struggle against China while the Qing government, under the control of the Manchu aristocracy, sold out the nation to foreigners and increased their plundering of the people. China’s internal and external contradictions were thus pushed to an unprecedented level. On the other hand, with the initial development of national capitalism which followed the Sino-Japanese War, the national bourgeoisie formed an independent class. Bringing an activist approach to modern Chinese reformism, the bourgeoisie instigated the revolutionary and the constitutionalist movements.

The political representatives of the bourgeoisie gave even more attention to the question of local politics and local self-government in the course of looking for a way to save the nation and reform politics. They created systematic ideologies which included plans for local self-government. As early as 1900, *China Weekly*, the organ of the Revive China Association (Xing Zhong hui) stated, “To save China from destruction we should institute divided government (*fenzhi*).” This solution, “rooted in feudalism and augmented with the local self-government institutions of the West, weighed everything ancient and modern in order to make a good plan for saving the age.”²⁷

In 1901, Zhang Jian, a famous gentry-merchant from Nantong who later became a leading representative of the constitutionalists, wrote a book called *A Critique of Reform*. He advocated that China emulate the local self-government system of Japan, “establishing prefecture and county assemblies,” in order to put local self-government into effect.²⁸ In 1902 Liang Qichao, who had fled abroad, wrote *A New People* (*Xinmin shuo*); his chapter “Self-Government,” emphasized the question of local self-government. In 1902 Kang Youwei also published a profound analysis of the question of local self-government in his chapter “The Self-Government of Citizens” (*Gongmin zizhi pian*) in his *Notes on Official Institutions* (*Guanzhi yi*). Especially between 1903 and 1905, intellectuals from the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie greatly stimulated intellectual support for the local self-government movement of the late Qing.

“Build schools, send students abroad.” This was the most important feature of the “new policies” that the Qing government put into effect. During the first few years of the twentieth century the number of old schools reformed and new schools established (including official, public, and private institutions) nearly doubled, as did the number of students. The number of students going abroad to study also dramatically increased. In particular, many students who emerged out of the academies or returned from study abroad were influenced by the “Western learning” and “new learning” of capitalism, and their ways of thinking and political views were accordingly transformed. Many youth became bourgeois intellectuals. The transition from feudal literati created a completely new type of intellectual.

The emergence of the new type of intellectual group not only augmented the strength of the bourgeoisie but also became the main force for the dissemination of capitalist culture. This had consequences contrary to the hopes the Qing government had initially put in its reform efforts. Students studying abroad in Japan founded a number of student journals which opposed the feudal autocratic rule of the Qing and called for bourgeois democracy. Student journals published a great deal on local self-government and, together with the journals of the Constitutionalists and general interest magazines in China itself, formed the intellectual base for local self-government. Their encouragement and propaganda influenced a broad range of social and political thought. “Local self-government, local self-government riotously fills our ears.”²⁹ “Throughout the nation it has been explained so frequently that all its details are known.”³⁰

Chinese students in Japan tended to favor an anti-Qing revolution at this time. Five beliefs marked their views on local self-government.

First, local self-government was a route to staving off disaster and creating a foundation for the nation. The crucial task facing China was to strengthen the country and end its humiliations—to solve the crisis afflicting the nation. Progressive students in Japan held that “local self-government constitutes the basis of the nation in today’s world” and so local self-government institutions “are the essential means of national salvation.”³¹ In 1904 *Zhengyi tongbao* published an article which stated, “There is a method that may solve the crisis facing China today,” namely, “the system of local self-government.” The article also said, “In a country that has long suffered injuries from autocratic rule, all the various methods have advantages and disadvantages: Only local self-government has advantages without disadvantages.”³² In the same year *Shibao* also pronounced: “Such various ways of saving the nation today as institutional reform, restoring the navy, and building schools have turned into empty and unfulfilled illusions. Putting aside their impracticality, even if they could be instituted, the results would be minimal. Aside from local self-government, what can we do? What can we do?”³³

Second, local self-government was a road leading to the development of industry and the strengthening of the nation. The bourgeoisie was primarily

concerned with developing capitalist commerce and industry and so promoting its own economic power. Chinese students in Japan argued that local self-government and the development of industry were related. "When local self-government is fully carried out, industry will flourish and national strength rise. Local self-government and industry have an inherently close relationship." Local industries share a common organization with the local people; therefore, "for the Chinese people to promote industry . . . those whose purpose is to protect the nation and the race must urgently use the model of local self-government."³⁴ Local self-government is the system which gives local gentry and merchants the most benefits and the safest opportunities for investment.³⁵ Zhang Jian's ideas were typical of the perception of local self-government held by gentry and merchants at the time. He said, "The strength of the nation is rooted in self-government, and the roots of self-government lie in industry and education. If we fail to correct our problems, we can only rely on mercy."³⁶

Third, self-government was an absolutely essential part of state administration and should be promoted equally with the bureaucracy. Chinese students in Japan analyzed the relationship between self-government and bureaucracy on a theoretical basis, concluding that there were two kinds of administrative organs in modern states: the central government bureaucracy and local self-rule. Bureaucratic organs gave a country direct administration, and their goal was to sustain national strength directly—such areas as foreign affairs, the military, and finances fell under bureaucratic administration. Self-government organs gave a country indirect administration, and their goal was to seek national administration indirectly, through local people governing such local affairs as education, policing, and all the concerns related to the peace and happiness of the locality. Direct administration was "bureaucratic rule" (*guanzhi*) and indirect administration was "self-government" (*zizhi*). "Therefore institutions of self-government supplement what bureaucratic rule lacks, and are carried on in mutual support with bureaucratic rule."³⁷

Fourth, local self-government formed the basis of cultivating citizenship, extending popular rights and carrying out constitutional government. Extending popular rights and carrying out constitutional government was the heart of the political reform movement of the bourgeoisie at the beginning of the twentieth century. Extending popular rights required first raising the national consciousness and the people's capacity for political participation. The students proclaimed that the significance of local self-government lay not only in popular political participation but also in perfecting constitutional government:

The nations with constitutions today must exert themselves to foster local self-government if they are to carry out constitutional government. This is precisely because popular political participation lies first in constructing the institutions of the state and second in constructing local institutions. These are related tasks, and managing the great affairs of state is impossible without local rule.³⁸

In the upsurge of constitutionalist thought in 1905, public opinion began to focus on the question of the relationship between local self-government and constitutionalism. In that year the *Pubao* of Shanxi advocated local self-government as a way to get the people ready for constitutional government.³⁹ And the *Nanfang bao* proclaimed, “A constitution in China today should be based on local self-government,” and it asked the government to prepare for constitutional procedures by permitting public elections of local gentry and public discussions of local affairs.⁴⁰ “Local assemblies are the basis of the self-government of the people,” a *Dongfang zazhi* editorial proclaimed in 1906, adding that, indeed, they were already being established, thus giving the people political experience that “should produce great results after the constitution is promulgated.”⁴¹

Fifth, based on their knowledge of the above points, public opinion leaders suggested concrete plans to implement a program for pursuing local self-government. The students in Japan published an article in 1903 that pointed out that although Chinese society did not call itself self-governing, such was in fact local reality. “Gentry are truly the representatives of local self-government” since the scope of their activities in managing local affairs was roughly equivalent to local self-government bodies in other countries. The basis of local self-government in China was firm, though it was not highly effective, owing to the lack of self-government institutions. Therefore, the key to this problem lay in “organizing local self-government institutions,” which particularly required that:

1. The gentry who were well established in each locality be unified into a self-government body;
2. Self-government bodies be divided into assemblies and administrative organs;
3. The delegation of responsibilities be determined by voting among the gentry;
4. Matters of debate be determined by majority vote;
5. The officials of the organs all hold honorary posts.

The author of this essay believed that “the foundations of local self-government in China have thus developed historically, while the methods for implementing self-government can simply and easily be practiced in this way. Therefore, of all the areas of reform occurring in China, local self-government holds the brightest promise for a better future.”⁴²

The Ideas of Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao on Citizen Self-Government

Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao were the most important representatives of the bourgeois constitutionalists. They were new-style intellectuals who had received a traditional Confucian education and who were also partly educated in Western culture—to the point that Zhang Jian, for example, completely supported

capitalism—but they were also local gentry who maintained a close relationship with the feudal government. They were dissatisfied with aspects of traditional autocracy, but they neither wished nor dared to destroy the structure of feudal despotism. They only urged top-down reforms to make China rich and strong within the scope of traditional morality. After the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, they began to organize constitutionalist groups in and out of China, published constitutionalist journals, and launched a number of nationwide petition movements, thus forming the backbone of the constitutionalist movement in the late Qing.

In sketching out the intellectual system of the reform policies of constitutional monarchism, Kang and Liang included a number of ideas supporting local self-government and cultivating citizenship consciousness:

First, Kang and Liang regarded the relationship between local self-government and the strengthening of China as crucial. In his "Citizen Self-Government" (1902) Kang found that the Western nations were constantly becoming stronger, their people smarter, their resources better utilized, their schools more plentiful, their technology more advanced, their bridges and roads improved, their police creating greater security, their railroads and banks expanding, and their lands and lakes being developed—and that their military preparedness and shipping industry were perfected to the point "they dominate the whole world and are taking over the Orient." The reasons for this "are that in all these countries, the citizens exhaust their strength, work with all their intelligence, self-govern their localities (*zizhi qi xiangyi*), and thus stabilize the foundations of the state." This described not only Europe and the United States but also Japan, which, since the Meiji Restoration, has achieved "sudden strength" (*zouqiang*) through the practice of local self-government. That Russia and China were "alike in their autocracy" but "differed in strength" was also owing to the former's practice of local self-government. Kang claimed that China's "defeats and weaknesses" were a "problem that lay in officials who displaced democratic governance instead of allowing the people to govern themselves. The solution for this lies in respecting local self-government."⁴³ In a postscript appended to Kang's article, Liang Qichao noted, "We can say that to make local self-government the basis of the state will create political skills, and it is the most urgent task confronting China today."⁴⁴

Second, Kang and Liang demonstrated the relationship between self-government and the concentration of power. Kang's 1903 "Critique of Bureaucratic Rule" (*Guanzhi yi*) began with a criticism of the evils of the Chinese bureaucracy.⁴⁵ "The way China is governed is nothing more than the way other nations govern their dependencies, simply seeking to suppress disturbances and manage finances," he noted. "When people lack the right of self-government, they cannot achieve everything they should. When government lacks centralization, it cannot administer affairs appropriately." Kang proceeded to point out that reforms had to begin by dealing with the bureaucracy:

Bureaucratic systems take three forms: for the sake of the people, for the sake of the state, and in the area between the state and the people. . . . The best institutions for the people are found in citizen self-government (*gongmin zizhi*); the best institutions in the area between the people and the state are found in making borders and increasing the number of officials; and the best institutions for the state are found in establishing more offices while centralizing powers.

Kang felt that all three elements were equally necessary in providing good rule. He emphasized that “for the people, local self-government is best, whereas for the state, concentrating central powers is best.” Liang Qichao, examining the relationship between self-government and centralization from the viewpoint of political structure, concluded:

Centralization and self-government support and nourish each other and are equally necessary before a governmental system can be complete. Like the two wheels of a cart or the two wings of a bird, both are necessary. If we compare the various countries of the world, for the most part the more strength local self-government has, the more solid are the state’s foundations and the more civilized are its people.⁴⁶

Third, Kang and Liang pointed out that local self-government formed the basis for bringing about popular rights and that the citizenship consciousness of the Chinese needed to be further nurtured in order to expand popular rights. Kang thought that Western nations had become wealthy and strong “because they all regard the people as the basis of national culture. Since all the people have the right to participate in assemblies and the responsibility to be concerned about their country, they are called citizens.”⁴⁷ Surveying the general conditions of each country, Kang found that states composed of citizens were strong whereas those without citizens were weak. When those with citizens were defeated they still survived while those without citizens perished. Only China lacked a citizenry. “If China had citizens, our 400 million people would constitute the largest citizenry, and when countries of greater and lesser numbers of citizens are compared, China would certainly be stronger than the Powers. Reforms should therefore begin by establishing a citizenry.” In order to expand popular power, Kang advocated that “provinces, prefectures, counties, and townships all raise citizens, elect assemblies, and hold public discussions.” Liang Qichao confidently stated that the creation of democracy lay in practicing local self-government: “Whether or not there is popular power lies not only in participation in parliamentary politics but even more in practicing local self-government. Where local self-government is strong, popular power will inevitably flourish; otherwise, it will fail. Therefore local self-government is the primary basis of popular power.”⁴⁸

Fourth, Kang and Liang proceeded with concrete plans to build local self-

government. In his "Citizen Self-Government," Kang compared the local self-government systems of Europe, America, and Japan, concluding that the U.S. system could not be executed in China but that the French, German, British, and Japanese systems somewhat resembled that of traditional China. For China to practice local self-government, therefore, it could "follow traditional local customs and select from the British, German, French, and Japanese systems." Kang proceeded to determine the duties of local officials and the provisions for provincial, prefectural, and county assemblies. Kang considered that "after starting local self-government, the people will certainly become rich and happy, scholars will certainly become knowledgeable and courageous, and China will no longer be weak."⁴⁹ Liang proffered similar suggestions in his mock-official report on constitutional governments of 1905.⁵⁰

In sum, clearly the formation and development of local self-government ideas in the late Qing chiefly resulted from Western influence. But their ultimate origins lay in the economic development of national capitalism in China and the maturation of the bourgeoisie. The issue of local self-government in the late Qing allowed the display of the opposition of the new bourgeoisie to feudal despotism as they demanded higher social status for themselves and promoted capitalism. Their support for local self-government had a progressive function in opposing monarchical autocracy, raising the people's consciousness of political participation, and advancing the reform movement. They formed an important element in the rise of modern democratic political thought. Of course, the weaknesses intrinsic to the national bourgeoisie and in particular to the bourgeois constitutionalists severely limited their plans for local self-government. They thought that China already had local self-government though it lacked the term. They connected local self-government to the expansion of feudal gentry power, even advocating that feudal despotism control and plan for local self-government. This not only undercut the democratic aspects of local self-government but also created obstacles to the progress of the local self-government movement throughout the late Qing.

The Control of the Qing Government over Local Self-Government

Space limitations prevent us from examining the actual operations of self-government organizations.⁵¹ However, the question of the imperial government's role in the local self-government movement is critical to questions of social and political change as well as to issues of citizenship and participation in government. Most previous studies of local self-government during the late Qing have been from the point of view of the bourgeoisie. In fact, it was also a basic policy of the Qing government to put local self-government into practice. The widespread support for local self-government was closely related to the attitudes of the feudal political elites. Understanding the local self-government movement requires a grasp of the local self-government policies of the Qing.

Social Conditions in the Late Qing

After the mid-Qing, the traditional political structures manifestly began to fall apart, the prestige of the central government declined, the power of regional governors grew, and society at its basic levels was tending to get out of control. Chinese society was in fact disintegrating. There were many reasons for this, but the following two aspects of the problem were critical:

1. *The social differentiation that occurred within the gentry class and the political awakening of the gentry.* As noted above, gentry power was the basis of feudal bureaucratic politics. As social disturbances increased after the Sino-Japanese War, the gentry, who had traditionally ruled the realm with the emperor, began to divide into distinct groups. Although the differentiation of the gentry had just started and a “middle class” was still far from forming, the split with the government was nonetheless deepening. The movements to boycott foreign goods, repudiate the debt, and protect the railroads were basically instigated by the new gentry-merchants. Local gentry especially played a major role in the promotion of local self-government. The differentiation and the awakening of the gentry not only created a critical force pushing for social reform but even shook the foundations of Qing rule.

2. *The rapid increase of population.* This increase nearly exhausted the increases in wealth that accompanied it and made it particularly difficult for the government to supervise society. The number of officials in the Qing was more than two times as many as in the late Ming, but the population had increased by several more times, reaching 400 million. This sharp increase not only aggravated the social problems of the late Qing, expanding the tasks the government faced in supervising society, but also multiplied social disturbances, since the rural economy remained backward and the number of unemployed vagrants increased. Some pointed out at the time that “the degree of disorder in China is in direct proportion to the size of the population.”⁵² Although this kind of attitude was one-sided, it is certainly true to say that the increasing population posed a serious threat to the political order of the traditional society, relentlessly challenging the bureaucratic system of the Qing.

The Qing government had to face directly the ever-worsening social problems mentioned above. It had to find ways to readjust the relationship between state and society and to strengthen control over local society. The official Qing constitutionalists emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century out of the need to stabilize the rule of the landlord class and the need to protect their own interests. These men advocated the reconstruction of local politics to put local self-government into practice. In 1906 the Qing government promulgated the edict preparing for a constitution, and top officials rushed to memorialize in favor of local self-government as the basis of constitutionalism. Yuan Shikai, governor-general of Zhili, Zhao Erxun, the Shengjing (Liaoning) military commander, and Duanfang, governor-general of Jiangsu and Zhejiang, began to institute local self-government in the areas under their control.

The sincere pleadings of its own best officials were added to domestic and international pressures, and the policymakers of the Qing court had to move. As long as they could leave aside the constitutional question of limiting the emperor's powers, they tolerated the delegation of some political powers to the localities, which became a major trend. The court formally proclaimed in September 1907: "Let the Bureau of People's Government (Minzhengbu) appropriately draft self-government regulations, beg approval, and then We will order the governors of all the provinces to choose locations to begin to implement them."⁵³ In 1908 the Office of Constitutional Publications (Xianzheng bianchaguan) drew up the "List of Preparatory Steps by Year" for a constitution, which created a concrete plan for gradually achieving local self-government.⁵⁴

These facts explain how local self-government was able to progress so rapidly in the late Qing: not only because of demands from society but also because of the needs of the government. The demands from society certainly reflected the hopes and demands of local interest groups represented by the newly risen bourgeoisie. In terms of the needs of the government, however, it is more that the Qing was selecting measures to maintain its precarious rule and increase its control over society than that the feudal ruling class was retreating before the newly risen bourgeoisie.

Qing Local Self-Government Policies

The late Qing local self-government movement can be roughly divided into two stages. First, in the period to 1908 certain regions were influenced by the tides of political reform and the popularity of local self-government. This stemmed from the gentry-merchant class either acting on its own or under government supervision. Second, in the period after 1909, local self-government was entirely coordinated by the Qing government as part of its constitutional preparation plans. The accomplishments of the local self-government movement in the first stage were diverse since it lacked central organization. After the Qing formalized its local self-government policies, systems and procedures inevitably became more standardized. As the local self-government movement fell under the government's control, however, it became more directed toward benefiting the ruling class.

The local Qing government's attitudes toward self-government can be seen in the regulations of the various local self-government organizations. On January 18, 1909, the Qing formally promulgated "The Local Self-Government Regulations for Cities, Towns, and Townships" and "The Local Self-Government Election Regulations for Cities, Towns, and Townships" as drafted by the Bureau for People's Government and approved by the Office of Constitutional Publications.⁵⁵ On February 3, 1910, the government announced "The Self-Government Regulations for the Capital" and "The Self-Government Election Regulations for the Capital,"⁵⁶ and on February 6 it promulgated "The Self-Government Regulations for Prefectures, Sub-Prefectures, Departments, and Counties" and "The

Regulations for the Election of Assemblymen for Prefectures, Sub-Prefectures, Departments, and Counties.”⁵⁷ By this time, a pattern was established for the local self-government system.

The organizational forms of local self-government were basically modeled on those of Japan with only slight changes. Self-government was divided into two levels: the basic level of cities, towns, and townships, and an upper level of prefectures, subprefectures, departments, and counties. The local self-government systems of both levels involved such matters as territory, residents and representatives, the scope of self-government, self-government expenditures, organization, supervision, and so forth. Local self-government systems thus appeared to be modern, but they remained under central government supervision. Self-government became an aid to bureaucratic rule.

In its memorial regarding the self-government regulations for cities, towns, and townships, the Office of Constitutional Publications pointed out:

The origins of self-government lie in the sovereignty of the state (*guoquan*); when sovereignty permits it, the basis of self-government is established. The self-government agreement therefore cannot violate the laws of the country; self-government arrangements therefore cannot contravene the supervision of the bureaucracy. *Self-government* thus refers to that which accompanies bureaucratic rule without contradicting it; it is absolutely not a term referring to that which moves ahead on its own regardless of bureaucratic rule.⁵⁸

In other words, self-government could not infringe on imperial powers or break loose of the officialdom to become independent. “The Self-Government Regulations for Cities, Towns, and Townships” clearly stipulated: “Local self-government exists exclusively to benefit the locality and to aid bureaucratic rule. According to the regulations, publicly elected qualified gentry and commoners will in turn be supervised by officials.” Local self-government not only had the purpose of aiding bureaucratic rule but would also be under strict government supervision and control. Local officials had the power to investigate whether self-government personnel contravened regulations, order them to make progress reports, verify their budgets, check their files, and conduct personal investigations at any time. Officials could even request the provincial governor to “disband the city, town, or township assemblies and boards of directors, and dismiss the members of self-government organs.”⁵⁹

The scope of self-government of prefectures, subprefectures, departments, and counties was even more restricted. The original regulations proposed by the Bureau for People’s Government stipulated that they be administered by boards of directors, but after revision by the Office of Constitutional Publications their administrative organs became boards of councilors headed by the top official of the locality. This emphasis on central authority followed the Japanese model of local government. “The Self-Government Regulations for Prefectures, Sub-Prefectures, Departments, and Counties” stipulated that “the officials in charge

of the prefectures, sub-prefectures, departments, and counties have the right to order reconsideration or veto decisions of the assemblies or boards of councilors." The regulations also allowed for the governors and governor-generals to petition the Bureau for People's Government to dismiss local assemblies.⁶⁰ The Qing government was thus extremely conservative in planning for local self-government, and downright reactionary in protecting its own powers. This made it difficult for local self-government to escape bureaucratic control.

From January 1909 to February 1910, the Qing promulgated local self-government regulations for every level of government, and local self-government organization began to become uniform. The movement thus entered its second stage as every province began to plan for local self-government. The chief results of the first stage were: (1) the establishment of local self-government planning stations that began investigations and elections; (2) the opening of self-government research institutes that educated and trained people in local self-government; and (3) the selection of assemblies, management boards, self-government organs, and personnel, and the establishment of local self-government offices.

According to the reports from the provinces, before the 1911 Revolution exploded, local self-government organizations had been established around the country.⁶¹ Threatened by waves of modern political reform pounding against it, the Qing ruling class was forced to accept local self-government as a measure of self-preservation. However, the goal of the Qing was definitely not to give the people the right to participate in government through assemblies nor to bring about bourgeois democracy; rather, it was to use the framework of self-government to stabilize the basis of autocratic government by adjusting the relationship between government and society based on a new "joint rule" of gentry and merchants. Because of the interference and control of the Qing ruling class, the local self-government movement of the late Qing was more an official than a popular phenomenon.

The Significance of the Local Self-Government Movement in the Late Qing

Local Self-Government and Political Development

The Revolution of 1911 marked an extremely significant movement in the bourgeois-democratic revolution while at the same time it constituted an important reform of the Chinese political system. The revolution overthrew the despotism that had persisted for more than two thousand years, created a bourgeois-democratic republic, and offered an unprecedented opportunity to develop bourgeois-democratic politics.

However, as every province pursued its own politics and established its own system, political order could not be maintained in the early republic and basic government fell into chaos. Some local self-government organs made superficial

changes while continuing to use their old regulations, while others amended their rules to plan for new local self-government organs. Owing to their political and theoretical weakness, the Chinese bourgeoisie lacked experience with bourgeois-democratic republican political systems and local self-government institutions. Real power after the revolution thus rapidly fell into the hands of the landlord-official bourgeoisie—as represented by Yuan Shikai. Yuan made himself into a dictator by using administrative techniques to increase his control over the central and provincial regimes. He destroyed the national assembly and local representative organs at every level of the early republic. In February 1914, Yuan ordered a halt to self-government groups and then the dissolution of all provincial assemblies.⁶² He thus destroyed the local self-government which the bourgeoisie had been promoting since the late Qing.

A general look at the local self-government movement of the late Qing shows that since it emerged out of the actions of both society and government, it had multiple functions and influence. In terms of political development, the rise of local self-government helped to modernize early Chinese politics in four respects:

First, the inception of local self-government further fractured traditional social organization and further strengthened social mobility. The traditional social organization based on the fundamental classes of literati, peasants, artisans, and merchants had not changed in a long time. Only the literati could advance through the examination system, which limited social mobility. However, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the class structure of the traditional “four groups” began to fall apart. The timing of the constitutionalist self-government movement in the late Qing was affected by the abolition of the examination system. Local self-government thus gave local gentry and businessmen new ways to make a living. In such places as Shanghai and Guangdong, more open to new ideas, the main supporters of local self-government were precisely those gentry and merchants who had become bourgeoisie or were in the process of doing so. Their embourgeoisement not only undermined the basis of traditional society but also enlarged the national bourgeoisie. In addition, new social niches were being formed. People could use their experience in the local self-government movement to create new roles and seek new positions for themselves in industry and commerce, new-style education, publishing and the press, and every kind of cultural and political work. Although the late Qing increase in social mobility could not change the social structure or political forms in a basic way, it did move China into a transitional stage between the traditional “closed” social system and a more modern “open” system.

Second, the promotion of local self-government partially changed the shape of local political power. Even though the Qing government emphasized the goal of “using self-government to aid bureaucratic rule,” the establishment of representative assemblies at each level brought the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie, carrying the spirit of capitalism, into local politics. They gradually

reformed the predisposition to "unify the empire" held by the traditional landlord class and began to change the nature of local political power. Because the members of assemblies and managerial boards were all selected by local elections, many of the representatives of the business community, possessing economic power and a certain social influence, were able to move into self-government organs and demand a share in local administration and leadership.

For example, the participants in the Shanghai local self-government of the late Qing included retired officials, compradores, and every kind of merchant and industrialist, as well as people from the worlds of education, philanthropy, and the like. However, the real leadership of self-government organs remained from beginning to end in the hands of the bourgeoisie, led by the business and educational communities. In Suzhou the leaders of the self-government movement chiefly came from the more socially influential middle and upper levels of the merchant community. Through such basic self-government organizations as the Citizens' Association (*Shimin gongshe*), they began to acquire the administrative powers necessary to manage city government. Even though these were self-government organs which the Qing government had planned to be under official control, many new-style gentry-merchants participated in them. This not only caused political power to gradually shift downward but it also reformed the feudal nature of traditional local power, thus laying the foundation for the bourgeoisie to create a new national regime.

Third, the promotion of local self-government enlarged social and political participation. Traditional society was an autocratic society monopolized by Confucianism, and the vast majority of people had long been forced outside of political life, completely indifferent to political concepts. But in the late Qing, the development of society, the economy, culture, and especially the promotion of local self-government caused the transformation of local political life. Not only did it raise political consciousness but it opened avenues of participation for the people. One important form political participation took in the late Qing was voting in elections. When the Self-Government Bureau of Tianjin (*Tianjin zizhiju*) was established, it immediately conducted general elections. Although qualified voters constituted only 3 percent of the total population, these elections nonetheless foreshadowed the universal participation of modern times. The "public elections" of the Shanghai General Public Works Bureau (Shanghai zong gongchengju) were limited to the gentry-merchants rather than general elections, but the bureau still promoted the rights of the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie. Representatives elected to self-government organizations expressed the interests of various social groups, reflecting a new level of political participation. This had positive effects on the development of local politics in the late Qing.

Fourth, the establishment of local self-government organs opened the road to parliamentary politics for the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie, who used the opportunities thus presented to make important gains in local enterprises, urban government, and culture and education. Of the nearly seventy proposals

made to the General Public Works Bureau and the City Self-Government Office of Shanghai, aside from a few dealing with the self-government organs themselves, the great majority concerned local enterprises and city government.⁶³ Such resolutions resulted in the general development of Shanghai: repairing roads, establishing schools, fixing bridges, dredging canals, rebuilding walls and gates, increasing the number of wharves and dikes, establishing police offices, increasing tax receipts, and so forth.⁶⁴ Zhang Jian, a leader of the Constitutional-ist movement, was also a proponent of local self-government who systematically built up local self-government in his hometown of Nantong. He said, “I embrace village-ism and local self-government, including enterprises, education, water-works, communication and transportation, charity, public benefit, and so forth.”⁶⁵

In sum, the local self-government movement of late Qing managed to promote political reform. If early European local self-government was a “political achievement” which stemmed from the long development of the bourgeoisie, then the local self-government of the late Qing was also a product of the development of Chinese capitalism, a political achievement rooted in the developmental stage of the national bourgeoisie.

The Historical Limits of Local Self-Government in the Late Qing

Even though the local self-government movement had positive and progressive functions, it did not develop completely according to the desires of the bourgeoisie. It was not able to attain the bourgeoisie’s initial goal of local political reform, which was frustrated in the end. The two basic reasons for this are as follows:

First, local self-government formed but one part of the overall plan for constitutional preparation, and it was directly related to everything from other aspects of building a constitutional system to general sociohistorical conditions. Chinese social development was extremely unbalanced in the late Qing. Outside of a few commercialized ports and important cities that had been brought into the twentieth century, the great bulk of society was still sunk in traditional agrarian conditions, a stagnant economy, a lack of finances and resources, and a low level of culture and education. The promotion of local self-government was thus obstructed, and it did not produce the effects across society that it should have.

The problem of education was key. It was first necessary to develop the people’s knowledge in order to put local self-government into practice; otherwise democracy could not be strengthened. The Qing government’s nine-year plan for constitutional preparation included universal elementary schooling so that within five years the literacy rate would reach 1 percent; within six years, 2 percent; and within seven years, 5 percent.⁶⁶ This plan was commendable but was not easy to put into practice. Money was needed before schools could be

built, and it was difficult to raise self-government funds at the time. In the economically developed areas of Jiangsu, for example, ordinary departments and counties raised 1,000 to 6,000 yuan in self-government funds, sums never enough to disburse. In Henan, according to the official financial estimates, the province would need more than 1.2 million taels to establish preparatory offices, self-government study offices, and propaganda offices, and to conduct investigations and hold elections—but the province was broke. Merely to budget the 80,000 taels necessary to begin in the capital alone was difficult.⁶⁷ How much worse off were the self-government offices in the rest of the province! Moreover, with all the various elements of constitutional government being pursued at the same time, it was difficult to keep track of them all. Objectively, this accounted for the extremely limited results of self-government in the late Qing.

Second, owing to the weaknesses of social mobilization and strict government controls, a number of officials and gentry were able to gain control of self-government organs for their own purposes. The bourgeois democratic side of local self-government thereby lost out. Some scholars have maintained that local self-government was designed to preserve the social order and was executed for the benefit of three groups: the bourgeois constitutionalists, the ruling official constitutionalists, and conservative local gentry dedicated to protecting their own advantage.⁶⁸ Aside from a few developed areas under the control of the new-style gentry-merchants, the vast majority of local self-government organs in peripheral and backward areas were under the control of old-style local officials and gentry. Some of them used the opportunity presented by local self-government to increase taxes. Some of them used the opportunity presented by official power to exploit the community. A contemporary exposed the situation: “The local self-government of today is bureaucratic rule. It is gentry rule.”⁶⁹ So-called local self-government “has become entirely a tool for murdering people!”⁷⁰

The self-aggrandizement of local officials and gentry not only meant that local self-government lost the value it should have had but in particular led to unbearable harassment of the people. A tide of resistance against local self-government swept across many places. Jiangsu offers a good example of this. The relevant statistics show that from February 1910 to March 1911, thirty-seven instances of opposition to self-government occurred. Self-government offices were destroyed, schools were torn down, and self-government officers were beaten.⁷¹ It is worth noting that nearly all the instances of opposition to local self-government were provoked by problems of finances, land, or buildings whereas none arose for political reasons. Opposition stemmed partly from the people’s unfamiliarity with local self-government, but the main factor was the strangulation and destruction of local self-government by the feudal ruling classes.

Two conclusions emerge from a general survey of local self-government in the late Qing:

First, the primary conditions for the development of modern Chinese politics

were the ability in a timely and rational way to insert various kinds of new social forces into the political system, to put social mobilization and unification into practice, and to establish the political foundations for harmony and stability. In a sense, this was leading to the redistribution of political power and the reformulation of the political structure. However, the traditional Chinese political system had long remained a matter of “rulership” and never a reform of “administration.” Feudal politics constantly slid along the endless cycle of order and chaos. Although the local self-government movement was beginning to reform the sociopolitical structure, it still consisted chiefly of focusing on “rulership” for the feudal ruling classes.

The goal of the Qing government was to establish the “assistant governing” position of the new gentry-merchants “as a means of compensating for deficiencies in official rule,”⁷² in order to strengthen imperial rule. The Qing gave no thought to the question of restructuring administration and thus had no way to satisfy the demands of the newly rising bourgeoisie or reach its goal of political unification. Since the bourgeoisie could not take power by peaceful means, it could only resort to violence. The Revolution of 1911 and the fall of the Qing were the necessary consequences of modern political developments.

Second, the local self-government movement was shaped by two distinct forces: the moderate camp of the new bourgeoisie and the feudal ruling class. In fact, it portended a struggle for power between two new political forces. In this kind of struggle between two forces whose interests were totally different, the bourgeoisie should have directed its attention first to the class nature of local self-government and to the independent and democratic nature of political power. Unfortunately, the Chinese bourgeoisie, born in the historical conditions of a semicolonial and semifeudal society, was weak both in strength and in morale. The bourgeoisie merely tried to “reduce imperial powers and turn the people into citizens”⁷³ within the logic and norms of the traditional political system. It took all their strength just to reach the stage of “cooperative rule between officials and gentry,” and they had no way to reach the goal of a real bourgeois democracy.

However, in the final analysis, the attempts at local self-government did shake the foundations of feudal rule and did produce electoral systems and assemblies (even if mostly in form alone). In terms of traditional political life, this meant a certain democratic enlightenment and social mobilization. In sum, the local self-government movement of the late Qing was a forerunner of modern local political reform and opened a road to political modernization.

Notes

Translated by Peter Zarrow. Notes are the author’s unless otherwise indicated.

1. See Zhou Zhongde and Yan Juxin, eds., *Xiandaihua wenti tansuo* (An exploration of the question of modernization) (Shanghai: Zhishi chubanshe, 1983), p. 54.

2. "Geguo difang zizhi kao" (An examination of self-government in various nations), *Dongfang zazhi* (Eastern miscellany) year 4, no. 10.
3. "Riben zhi difang zizhi" (Local self-government in Japan), in *ibid.*
4. "Riben difang zizhi tiyao" (The essentials of local self-government in Japan), *Zhengzhi guanbao* 22, no. 9, Guangxu 33, no. 3.
5. Fei Xiaotong, "Zai lun shuanggui zhengzhi" (Restudy the two-track politics), in *Xiangtu chongjian* (The reestablishment of the countryside) (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1948), p. 58.
6. "Zhongguo difang zizhi kao," *Dongfang zazhi*, year 4, no. 10.
7. Wu Han, "Shenquan" (Gentry power), in Wu Han, Fei Xiaotong et al., eds., *Huangquan yu shenquan* (Imperial powers and gentry powers) (Tianjin: Renmin chubanshe, 1988).
8. Geographical treatises of the Opium War period include Lin Zexu, ed., *Sizhou zhi* (Gazetteer of the four continents); Wei Yuan, *Haiguo tuzhi* (Illustrated gazetteer of the maritime nations); Liang Tingnan, *Hesheng guoshuo*; Xu Jiyu, *Yinghuan zhilue* (A brief survey of the maritime circuit); and so forth. The diaries and travel accounts of embassy officials from about the 1860s include Bin Chun, *Shengcha biji*; Liu Xihong, *Yingyao siji*; Zhang Deyi, *Shi Ying zaji*; Liu Qitong, *Ying fanshu zhenggai*; Shen Dunhe, *Yingjili guo zhilue*; Xu Jianyin, *Ouyou zalu*; and Song Yuren, *Taixi geguo caifengji*. All these works included descriptions of the local assemblies and self-government systems of Western nations.
9. Feng Guifen, "Jiao-Bin lu kangyi" (Straightforward words from the lodge of early Zhou studies), and "Fu xiangzhi yi" (In favor of returning to local government), in *Zhongguo jindai shiziliao congkan, Wuxu bianfa* (The 1898 reform movement), vol. 1, pp. 1–38, esp. pp. 8–10 (Shanghai: Shengzhou guoguangshe, 1953).
10. Zheng Guanying, *Shengshi weiyian* (Warnings to a prosperous age); "Zixu" (Preface) and "Yiyuan" (Assemblies), in *Wuxu bianfa*, vol. 1, pp. 40–42, 55–58.
11. Chen Qiu, *Zhiping tongji* (General discussion of order), "Jiushi yaoyi" (The essentials of saving the age), in *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 228.
12. Tang Zhen, *Weiyian* (Words of warning); "Yiyuan" (Assemblies), in *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 177.
13. Zheng Guanying, *Shengshi weiyian*, "Yiyuan" (Assemblies), in *ibid.*, pp. 56–57.
14. Chen Chi, *Yongshu* (Commonplace writings), *neibian*, "Xiangguan" (Township officials), in *ibid.*, pp. 234–35.
15. Zheng Guanying, *Shengshi weiyian*, "Yiyuan," in *ibid.*, p. 57.
16. He Qi and Hu Liyuan, *Xinzheng zhenquan* (True explanation of reform policies); "Xinzheng lunyi" (Discussion of reform policies), in *ibid.*
17. Liang Qichao, "Wuxu zhengbian ji" (Memoirs of the coup d'état of 1898); *Yinbingshi heji, wenji* (Collected writings from the Ice-Drinker's Studio), vol. 1, *juan* 8 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1936).
18. Liang Qichao, "Lun Hunan yingban zhi shi" (What should be done in Hunan), in *ibid.*, *juan* 3.
19. Liang Qichao, "Shang huiyi" (Merchant assemblies), in *ibid.*, *juan* 4.
20. Tan Sitong, *Tan Sitong quanji* (The complete works of Tan Sitong) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), p. 438.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Yan Fu, "Yuanqiang," in *Yan Fu ji* (Collected works of Yan Fu), vol. 1, p. 27 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), vol. 1, p. 27.
23. Yan Fu, "Shehui tongshan' anyu" (Notes on the complete criticism of society), in *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 932.
24. Yan Fu, "Fayi," in *ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 985, 982.

25. Ding Wenjian and Zhao Fengtian, eds., *Liang Qichao nianpu changbian* (The chronological biography of Liang Qichao), long edition, pp. 340, 289 (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1983), pp. 340, 289.

26. Huang Zunxian, “Huang Gong Dulian fang di yi er ci jiangyi” (The first two interviews with Huang Zunxian), *Xiangbao*, no. 5.

27. Lu Bozhou, “Lun zongtung juefei waitao” (The president is absolutely not subject to outside interference), *Zhongguo xunbao* (China weekly), no. 4.

28. Zhang Jian, “Bianfa pingyi,” in *Zhang Jizi jiulu* (Nine records of Zhang Jian) (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1991), zhengwen lu (political affairs record).

29. Mu Xiangyao, “Shanghai difang zizhi yanjiuhui jiangyanlu” (Lecture at the Shanghai local self-government study society), *Xianzheng zazhi* (Constitution journal), no. 2.

30. “Zhengwenshe xuanyanshu” (The manifesto of the Political Information Society), *Zhenglun* (Politics), no. 1.

31. “Lieqiang zai Zhina zhi tiedao zhengce: yihou” (Translation afterword: The railway policies of the Powers in China), *Youxue yibian* (Compilation of translations by students abroad), no. 5.

32. Deng Shi, “Zhongguo difang zizhizhi lun” (Local self-government institutions in China), *Zhengyi tongbao* 3, no. 1. Cited in “Difang zizhizheng lun” (Local self-government), *Dongfang zazhi* 1, no. 9.

33. Cited in “Difang zizhizheng lun” (Local self-government), *Dongfang zazhi*, 1, no. 9.

34. “Lieqiang zai Zhina zhi tiedao zhengce: yihou,” *Youxue yibian*, no. 5.

35. See Yokoyama Suguru, *Chūgoku no kindaika tochiho seiji* (Modernization and local government in China) (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1985).

36. Zhang Jian, “Ni ling huangdang diwei zizhi jibenchan qing fenqi jiaojia cheng” (Preparatory application for installment payments on taking wastelands and basic estates for self-government), *Zhang Jizi jiulu*, zizhi lu (self-government record).

37. “Gong Fazi” (pseud.), “Jinggao woxiangren” (Warning to my fellow regionals), *Zhejiang chao* (The tides of Zhejiang), no. 2.

38. Ibid.

39. Lu Zongyu, “Lixian siyi” (A private proposal for constitutionalism), *Dongfang zazhi* yr. 2, no. 10, from *Pubao*.

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56. Ibid., Xuantong 12th month, 30th day (no year), no. 824.
57. Ibid., Xuantong 2d year, 1st month, 8th day, no. 825.
58. Ibid., Guangxu 34th year, 12th month, 28th day, no. 445.
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61. See the provincial statistics in all the issues of *Zhengzhi guanbao* from Xuantong 1st year through 3d year. The local self-government planned under the Qing had already fulfilled its planned functions in terms of organizational forms.
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63. *Shanghaishi zizhizhi* (Self-government records of Shanghai City), *gongdu jiabian, yibian* (Office correspondence, 1:2).
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Imagining “Society” in Early Twentieth-Century China

Michael Tsin

By the early twentieth century, the concept of “society” (*shehui*) had emerged to occupy a privileged place in the discourse among Chinese political and intellectual elites. To them, the issue was of critical significance in the construction of a new polity. In one of his commentaries on “public morals” (*gongde*) in 1902, Liang Qichao, for example, urged his compatriots to cultivate a new kind of moral code (*lunli*), signified by a commitment to the collective (*qun*)—that is to say, to the welfare of society and nation.¹ Yet, despite such a clarion call, the precise role of “society” in the project of constructing the “nation” remained largely unclear. How exactly was “society” defined? In what ways could it contribute to the construction of a new nation? These are the questions which not only confronted the self-proclaimed revolutionaries of subsequent years seeking to remake the Chinese political landscape but also challenge historians trying to reexamine the sociocultural history of early twentieth-century China.

Instead of exploring the constructed meaning of “society” in its specific historical context, however, it has become quite common in recent years to explore the historical trajectory of late Qing and early republican China through the metanarrative of “civil society/public sphere.” The transformation of China in the last decade, to say nothing of the collapse of the Soviet Union and other former Eastern European states, has led to a resurgence of interest in the role of civic forces in the restructuring of political systems. To some historians, early twentieth-century China represents a moment of possibility, a time when a fledgling “civil society” flourished which *could* have led to further political changes. From this perspective, the Chinese example is simply a classic case of “arrested development.”² Still, given the context of the period, it is perhaps surprising that

few historians have addressed directly the issue of the relationship of the putative "civil society" to nationalism in China. One notable exception is Mary Rankin. Challenging those who view the issue as a contest between state and individual rights in the early republic, Rankin insists that nationalism "was not much of a hindrance" to the development of civil society. It was rather "a positive factor," since "nationalism encouraged associations, inspired confrontations with state power, fostered political participation, and stimulated demands for constitutional guarantees and limitations on governmental power."³

Nationalism, as Tom Nairn noted long ago, is "the modern Janus."⁴ In its articulation of popular sovereignty, nationalism does have the potential to create new political space. Most nationalist discourses, however, also legitimize the quest for an unitary state, often resulting in the denial of internal differences and pluralistic politics.⁵ Thus the point is not whether nationalism is good or bad for "civil society," as Rankin frames her argument. Rather it is that nationalism tends *simultaneously* to enable and repress a plurality of voices from within the polity. To put it another way, there is an *inherent* tension in the political discourse of early twentieth-century China: tension between the drive to create a cohesive unitary polity on the one hand, and the impulse to locate "society," as represented by the multiplicity of social interests, as the necessary basis of a modern nation on the other. Such tension was clearly revealed in the predicament of both the Guomindang and the Communists. In their self-anointed mission to "modernize" the polity, both the Guomindang and the Communists had to confront this problem, with varying solutions and results. Ultimately, the tension could be negotiated or suppressed but not effaced.

The issue here is not only that the increase in the number of "unofficial" social organizations in the public realm during the late Qing and the early republic did not in itself constitute civic power, as both Philip Huang and Frederic Wakeman suggest.⁶ It is also that those organizations—mercantile, philanthropic, native-place—were themselves often complicit in the forging of the nationalist discourse, as their members sought to identify and conflate their own interests with those of the "nation" (*guojia*).⁷ It is also important to remind ourselves that the civic organizations of the period were by no means opposed to a strong "state" as such. Rather, they were voicing their disenchantment with what they perceived to be ineffective government. Indeed, many of the social and intellectual elites who constituted the leadership of those organizations were eager to reinvent the "state" as one which would resist the foreign threat and was cognizant of, as it were, the interests of "society." It is, in short, misleading to analyze the plurality of civic voices in isolation from the nationalist project, since in the context of early twentieth-century China they were intrinsically bound together.

Indeed, as I will argue below, the constant reference to the emergence of "society" in early republican writings was less the result of the appearance of new civic organizations than a rearticulation of their role. The conceptualization

of the “social” as a discrete realm of activities, as Hannah Arendt once reminded us, was a sign of the modern age.⁸ In China, the discourse of “society” in the early twentieth century should therefore be seen in terms of a new imagination of the centrality of the “social” in the construction of a modern nation. For example, members of both the Guomindang and the Communists, as committed modernists, were concerned with the social basis of the new polity. Imbued with the spirit of the latest social theories, they were also convinced of their own ability to identify “social interests” methodically and to mobilize them accordingly. It is within this context of the remapping of social categories that such concepts as “class” (*jieji*) acquired particular significance. Indeed, the differentiation of “classes” not only facilitated the formation of a quasi-rational strategy for mobilization but also provided a new key for the articulation of the nationalist project. For despite the grounding of the nationalist discourse in the language of popular sovereignty, the question of the actual constitution of the “citizenry” (*guomin*) or the “masses” (*minzhong/qunzhong*) remained a contested issue. By representing “society” as a material body, social mapping—the demarcation of the populace into different categories as defined by “class” or “segment” (*jie*)—thus became instrumental in establishing or shifting the boundaries of the imagined national community. Selected categories could be either incorporated or rejected. The centrality of the “social” in the political discourse, in other words, was to lead increasingly to its own reification. “Society” was to be objectified. Its body was to be dissected, its constituents classified, and their ascribed interests represented.

Problematizing Society

The inscription of “society” as an organism or system which represents the intelligible totality of a web of interconnected processes and relations was made possible, of course, as a result of the production of the discipline of social science in nineteenth-century Europe, and in particular that of sociology.⁹ Sociological knowledge, as Eric Hobsbawm points out, was initially produced to address a fundamental political problem: how do people cohere and organize themselves in the modern world after the breakdown of the old order which had hitherto sanctioned subordination and rule?¹⁰ The task of sociologists, in other words, was to delineate the processes through which a cohesive “society” could be created. No doubt it was this central concern of sociology which first captured the attention of Yan Fu, who introduced such systematic study of “society” to the late Qing reader through his translation of Herbert Spencer’s *The Study of Sociology* in 1903. Impressed by the analogy of the social to biological organisms, Yan was also one of the first Chinese intellectuals to draw the connection between the health of the body social and the welfare of the nation.¹¹ Ironically Yan chose to name this novel branch of knowledge—sociology or sociological science—*qunxue*, presumably in order to evoke linkages to Chinese scholarship.

But it was the term *shehuixue*, derived from the Japanese neologism *shakai*, that was to gain currency in subsequent years.¹² Although for a time many Chinese writers continued to use the word *qun* (group/collective) and the compound *shehui* almost interchangeably, it was clear that a new vista on the social world had been opened up, as demonstrated in the works of that most prolific of early twentieth-century scholars and critics, Liang Qichao.

Like many of his contemporaries, Liang was profoundly concerned with the predicament of China. While in exile in Yokohama at the beginning of this century, he published his famous treatise on the "new people" (*xinmin*), emphasizing that the regeneration of the country must begin with the rejuvenation of her people. Invoking the classical notion of the "people" (*min*) as the true basis of the polity together with the Spencerian rhetoric of the survival of the fittest, Liang exhorted his compatriots to not shy from progress. He further urged his fellow Chinese to recognize the reality of the competition between different nations, to abandon their parochialism, and to transform themselves into "citizens" (*guomin*).¹³ Liang was also frustrated by the seeming inability of the populace of China to coalesce into a cohesive political unit—that is to say, to be disciplined into becoming the model constituents of a nation-state. While it was his rival Sun Yat-sen who popularized the description of the Chinese people as "a heap of sand" during the latter's lectures on nationalism in 1924, Liang had used the same metaphor in an essay which first appeared in 1901.¹⁴ It was thus with such concerns that Liang expounded his ideas on the concept of *qun*.

Liang's discourse on *qun* was undoubtedly meant to remind his fellow Chinese of the significance of the public realm and of the imperative of coming together in face of external enemies. But more important, the coupling of the social and the political was already quite apparent in his thinking. To Liang, the articulation of the idea of *qun* was intrinsically linked to practices in the political sphere. As he put it, *qun*, large or small, could be sustained only with clear regulatory provisions which enforced the rule of the majority, as was the practice of the "civilized" (*wenming*) nations. Lest one get the impression that Liang was interested in majority rule for its own sake, he quickly reminded us that it was actually a matter of survival. "If one is not subservient (*nuli*) to the dictates of one's *qun*," Liang warned, "then one will inevitably have to be subservient to the dictates of another *qun*." Obviously, in this world of fierce and perpetual struggles, the rationale for following the majority or their representatives was, quite simply, "to prevent the downfall of one's *qun*."¹⁵

If rules were essential for regulating relations within the *qun*, it was the cultivation of "public morals" (*gongde*), according to Liang, which enabled the formation of the *qun* in the first place. Using *renqun* and *shehui* as synonymous terms, Liang maintained that it was through the materiality of *gongde* that human beings were able to forge collective units: a quality which, in his opinion, was glaringly lacking among his compatriots.¹⁶ In contrast to "private morals" (*side*) which concerned the process of the perfection of the self, "public morals" were

the stuff of collectivities. What China needed, Liang wrote, was the strengthening of the latter—that is to say, moral codes (*lunli*) which governed the relationships of the individual to *shehui* and *guojia*—so that her people could move beyond parochial ties based on family, occupation, or place of origin. “Society,” in this analysis, was little more than the coming together of human beings who were guided by “public morals.” More important, though, it was such successful formation of “society” which in turn laid the basis of a vital nation. Moral principles, defined in this way, became almost utilitarian in nature. “Public morals” were key to the forging of society and nation. Indeed, as Liang put it, they were simply a way of codifying the needs of the collectivity: anything beneficial to the *qun* was good and morally desirable and vice versa. And those who shirked their duty to serve society and nation, disregarding their moral standing as private individuals, were simply “insidious pests” (*maozei*).¹⁷

The message, then, was that if China was to be invigorated, her “people” must learn to relate to each other in new ways. Despite their obvious emancipatory potential, such calls to social mobilization had less to do with the creation of a civic culture than with the construction of a “nation.” Indeed, the radical edge of mobilization would consistently run up against the disciplinary impulse of the nationalist project, as shown by Liang’s condemnation of the “insidious pests.” Who, after all, was to decide on the correct way to serve society and nation? As Liang put it, if a *qun* was to prevail over the forces from without, it must first solidify (*jianshu*) within. Indeed, in a treatise on constitutionalism written in 1910, Liang argued, with rather ominous implications for the future fate of China, that in order for a *qun* to solidify within, it must first suppress (*zhenya*) and eliminate (*xiaomie*) elements harmful to the *qun*. And it was through the exercise of such disciplinary force (*qiangzhili*) of suppression and elimination, otherwise known as the power to rule (*tongzhiquan*), that a “nation” (*guojia*) came into being. Liang thus concluded that the progression from an arbitrarily or loosely formed “society” (*renyi jiehe zhi shehui*) to a disciplined and organized “nation” (*qiangzhi zuzhi zhi guojia*) was both inevitable and human (*rendao*).¹⁸

It is important to note that human sociability, in Liang’s view, was not a product of the workings of reason and moral affection, nor was it simply a result of the demands of self-interest, as documented in much of the discourse on civil society in eighteenth-century Europe.¹⁹ Rather, it sprang from a deliberate and willful construction of certain moral norms. In fact, if the moral order of the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers was predicated on the pursuit of individual self-interest which then created the public good, Liang considered an obsessive concern with private well-being responsible for the lack of “public morals” in China.²⁰ Far from being that “genuine domain of private autonomy stood opposed to the state” as articulated by the bourgeois discourse of eighteenth-century Europe,²¹ the concept of “society” gained currency in China at the turn of the century as a signifier for the reconfiguration of relations among the people, which in turn laid the basis for the quest for national cohesion. Any analysis

of the social dynamics of the late Qing and the early republic, I will contend, must take into account these conflicting impulses, at once liberating and delimiting, embedded within the very process of the articulation of the "social" itself.

Representing Society: The Case of Canton

Liang's obsession with the process of mobilizing "society" for the disciplined construction of "nation" was representative of most of the molders of "public opinion" of early twentieth-century China. But how did the practice of the civic organizations of the late Qing actually relate to the intellectual and political discourses of the time? Take the city of Canton (Guangzhou) as an example. Like other urban centers, Canton witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of "unofficial" organizations during the twilight years of the Qing. It was, needless to say, the activities of such organizations which fueled the often effusive rhetoric of contemporary commentators and, moreover, capture the imagination of many social historians. They provide, in short, the stuff for the narration of the tale of the emergence of "society."

Historians have long been engaged in a debate on the extent of the autonomy of late Qing Chinese "society" vis-à-vis the "state." While Frederic Wakeman's recent description of Hankou, another center of commerce, as "a major entrepot completely under the official thumb of the government" seems overstated,²² there is indeed scant evidence to suggest that the activities of the plethora of "unofficial" social institutions, many of which engaged in philanthropic pursuits, in late nineteenth-century Canton amounted to any form of political and cultural challenge to the hegemony of the imperial order. But the debate itself is misleading. By predicated their analyses on the binary opposition of "state" and "society," historians were often forced to come to the rather obvious but lame conclusion that the social activism of the late Qing and early republic could not be readily reduced to either the realm of the "state" or that of "society." The problem with such analyses is that, as in the writings of the Chinese elites in the early twentieth century, they often employ the concepts of "state" and "society" as if the two were both discrete entities with readily discernible boundaries. In doing so, the dynamic and often tension-ridden process of the historical construction of "state" and "society" is inevitably lost. Using the case of late Qing Canton as an example, I will argue instead that the leaders of the civic organizations, in assuming the role as the representatives of "society," were actually also facilitating the (re)invention of the "state." Indeed, they embraced the modern idea of an omnipresent "state" not only because the latter was the logical expression of "society-and-nation" but, just as important, to legitimize the articulation of a new space in which their role as representatives of "society" could be performed. It is therefore entirely to be expected that the civic associations worked closely with, while remaining critical of, the "state." Every "society," as it were, needs its "state." Instead of regarding "society" as an entity in opposition

to the “state,” it should rather be seen as only the flip side of the same coin.

As seen through the prism of the political discourse of the late Qing, the civic organizations should not, and indeed must not, focus on their particularistic interests. Instead, they should demonstrate the spirit of “public morals” by involving themselves in the affairs of the public arena. In doing so, such associations were meant to provide the building blocks for larger *qun*, or the essential fabrics with which “society” could be woven together. To many Chinese intellectuals, then, these “unofficial” organizations were no longer simply mere supplements to the arms of government or random assemblies of select individuals. They were ascribed the status of the signal representative of that important new entity—“society”—which was to serve as a foil to the “state.”

The significance of such discourse was, of course, not lost on the leaders of the civic organizations themselves. From the turn of the century onwards in Canton, for instance, local civic leaders put together a conscious effort to make their presence felt beyond the philanthropic realm. The process was gradual but clearly perceptible, culminating in the founding of the Guangdong Merchant Self-Government Association (Yueshang zizihui) in late 1907. It is perhaps no accident that a chronicle of the activities of these “unofficial” organizations in Canton, compiled by a participant and published in 1910, was pointedly entitled *Quanyue shehui shilu* (A veritable record of Guangdong society). Even more telling were the words of Li Liangfu, a prominent silk and fabric merchant, which appeared in a prologue to the membership roster of the Guangdong Merchant Association for the Maintenance of Public Order (Yueshang weichi gonganhui), the most powerful civic organization in Canton in early 1912. The fortune of the nation, Li wrote, was directly linked to the power and influence (*shengshi*) of “society.” Western countries were characterized by what he called “citizen society” (*guomin shehui*). Reiterating the familiar theme put forward by many intellectuals, Li suggested that the establishment of republican form of government (*gonghe*) had propelled China to the same rank as the Western nations and had brought benefits to every citizen. That was why those who were aware (*shizhe*) were engaged in the bringing together of different associations (*lianjetuanti*) to safeguard the republic (*minguo*). “This timely rise of ‘society’ in our country (*woguoshehui suoyou yingshi erqi*),” Li wrote, “was the result of [the people’s] effort to carry out their unequivocal duty (*tianzhi*).”²³ It is perhaps superfluous to point out that Li and his associates had then arrogated to themselves the role of voice of this emerging “society.”

Li’s brash pronouncement notwithstanding, the Merchant Association for the Maintenance of Public Order was hardly the first civic organization to gain prominence in early twentieth-century Canton. To explore the intricate process through which late Qing civic leaders positioned themselves and negotiated the discursive space of “state” and “society,” it is instructive to retrace the career of Chen Huipu, perhaps the most visible of the civic leaders in Canton in the first decade of this century.

Chen Huipu, also known as Chen Jijian, personified a new type of civic leader who emerged in late Qing Canton and elsewhere. He is believed to have started his career as a shop assistant and then rose to become the manager of a so-called native bank (*yinhao*).²⁴ Like many of his contemporaries who came from humble origins, his passage to local elite circles was made through involvement in philanthropy. Chen first made his reputation by leading the effort to rescue one of the philanthropic institutions—the *Fangbiansuo*—from the brink of bankruptcy in 1899. The *Fangbiansuo*, which operated as a kind of shelter for the homeless and the needy, was initially established in 1894 in the aftermath of the plague which swept through the Canton area. At the time a similar government-sponsored institution already existed in the city. The initiative taken by the civic and merchant leaders in establishing the *Fangbiansuo* could thus be read as a strategic intervention in the public arena. And for the same reason, unlike in the case of other more prominent philanthropic institutions in Canton such as the *Aiyu shantang*, the new *Fangbiansuo* received little official backing. Disputes among its patrons led to its financial trouble several years later.²⁵ It was then that Chen Huipu and his associates successfully mobilized the resources of the other philanthropic institutions to come to the aid of the *Fangbiansuo*. Not only was the *Fangbiansuo* saved, it actually expanded and was formally renamed the Fangbian Hospital in 1901. The new institution reportedly became the best among the philanthropic establishments.²⁶

Chen's achievements, however, went beyond simply resurrecting a single organization. The combined effort of the different philanthropic institutions during the episode had laid the groundwork for the founding of the collective known as the "Nine Charitable Halls" (*jiushantang*).²⁷ Even a cursory look at the history of Canton in the first quarter of this century would reveal that the Nine Charitable Halls undoubtedly enjoyed a leadership role and was clearly the focal point of civic affairs. The instrumental role played by Chen Huipu in bringing about the collective thus set the scene for his maneuvering in the public arena in subsequent years.

Still, Chen's emergence from the world of philanthropic institutions onto the public stage was by no means instantaneous. He was, incidentally, also a founding patron of another of the Nine Charitable Halls, the Chongzheng *shantang*. The very first line of the latter's charter, while urging its members to observe the rules of the organization, stipulated that the institution was created specifically for philanthropic purposes and that it would not interfere in local public affairs (*disanggongshi gaibuganshe*).²⁸ The statement was copied almost verbatim from the charter of another member, the Liangyue Guangren *shantang*. These obligatory self-imposed restrictions were made, to be sure, to assure the always-watchful government of the organization's noble intent, and were subsequently honored more often in their breach. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that, for many involved in charitable activities, the transition from philanthropy to a more overtly public role was a gradual process, which must be understood within the context of the changing political and intellectual milieu of the time.

For example, during the anti-American boycott of 1905, even though the philanthropic institutions, through their close ties to the mercantile community, played an important part in the episode, it was still the gentry-merchants of the officially sponsored Chamber of Commerce who remained the most visible leaders. But the experience of some success in organizing the boycott, coupled with apparent general disenchantment with the vacillating gentry-merchant leaders, must have given the likes of Chen cause for thought. After the betrayal of two student activists by the leaders of the boycott committee, for instance, a poster reportedly appeared urging merchants and students to keep the boycott alive.²⁹ The internecine conflict and corruption of the gentry-merchants in the management of the new railroad company, which sprang up in the aftermath of the boycott, served only to delegitimize further their leadership.³⁰ At a time when the imperial order was in crisis and public discourse increasingly emphasized the virtue of *min* and *qun*, there were clear openings for those willing to step forward as organizers and representatives of “society.”

Chen, however, was not about to become a champion of civic autonomy. Using his philanthropic works as vehicles, Chen maneuvered into contact with the higher echelon of the official world. In fact, he might have even purchased a title of subprefectural magistrate (*tongzhi*) to enhance his own status.³¹ Indeed, his name appeared prominently among the list of founder-volunteers for the *pingtiao* (grain sale) relief agency of 1907, an undertaking which, needless to say, received the blessing of the highest level of the provincial government.³² Although Chen’s lack of rank still precluded him from heading the operation, it undoubtedly elevated his standing and paved the way for him to become the director of the Guangdong Anti-Opium Association (Guangdong *jieyan zonghui*).

In September 1906, an edict was issued by the Qing government ordering the stamping out of opium. The Guangdong authority, however, was slow to react. Sensing an opportunity, Chen and his associate Li Jieqi held a reception at the Fangbian Hospital on July 14, 1907. Among those in attendance was the Prefect Bi Changyan, who agreed to assist Chen’s effort to fight opium addiction by seeking support from his superiors. A second meeting was held at the Aiyu *shantang* where the Provincial Surveillance Commissioner (*anchashi*), Gong Xinzhan, headed a long list of bureaucrats in donating for the cause. Sanctioned by high officials, the Anti-Opium Association, now with the backing of the other philanthropic organizations, came into existence in an elaborate ceremony, reportedly attended by over 10,000 people, that took place at the Wenlan Academy on July 26. A delegation headed by the acting governor-general Hu Xianglin graced the occasion with its presence. As protocol demanded that such an enterprise be led by a member of the upper gentry, an honorary post, *zhawei zongli*, was created and filled by the *juren* Xu Zhixuan, a gentry-merchant from the Chamber of Commerce. There was, however, no question that real authority within the association lay with the director (*zhenghuizhang*), Chen Huipu. Indeed, upon the occasion Chen must have felt that his entrance into the world of

the official elites was finally secured. The association was even given an official seal (*qianji*) in order to distinguish the organization from other charities.³³

While clause 4 of the charter of the Anti-Opium Association contained the obligatory statement that the organization would stay clear of matters not relating to the campaign against opium, it was the first clause which was perhaps more faithful to the spirit of its founders. The aim of the association, it states, was "to assist the government in suppressing opium smoking and facilitating rehabilitation in order to establish the foundation for local self-government."³⁴ Indeed, emboldened by the success of the Anti-Opium Association, Chen and his associates went on to establish the Guangdong Merchant Self-Government Association (*Yueshang zizihui*) later in the year, thereby putting themselves squarely at the center of the public arena to become, as it were, the voice of "society."

The fortunes of the Merchant Self-Government Association perhaps best exemplify both the possibilities and limitations of the articulation of a new space for "society" in late Qing China. In the wake of the proposed conversion to constitutionalism, local self-government had been an officially sanctioned topic for discussion since 1906. The project was meant, of course, for the revitalization of the Qing government and the strengthening of the national polity within the framework of the dynastic regime. It was thus not surprising that the nominal head of the Merchant Self-Government Association was to be a local official, even though it was Chen Huipu's name which appeared most often in its correspondence.³⁵ And while the association declared in its charter that one of its functions was to "rigorously question" (*zhiwen*) the policies of local officials, it also stated at the same time that the pursuit of local self-government was a sign that "power had been bestowed upon the people" (*shouquanyumin*) by the government.³⁶ That which was given, needless to say, could also be taken away. The claims for "society" made by the civic organizations, it seems, were thus *at once* enabled and circumscribed by the articulation of the "state." More specifically, despite the opening created, the Merchant Self-Government Association's complicity in the nationalist discourse ultimately rendered the position from which it sought to speak confining indeed.

The immediate context for the establishment of the Self-Government Association was the West River incident. The incident was the result of an attempt by Britain to seize the right to patrol the West River, a crucial commercial waterway for Canton, for the apparent purpose of protecting its trading and shipping interests against rampant piracy. But even before the patrol actually began in December 1907, agitation led by Chen Huipu at the Anti-Opium Association had already started in anticipation of the British move, and resulted in the founding of the Self-Government Association. In a letter dated November 20, 1907 and addressed to the Chamber of Commerce, sent shortly after the formation of the new association, Chen and his associates argued that if the West River fell under foreign control, the Yangzi and other internal waterways would soon follow. The letter contrasted the response of the Foreign Ministry at Peking to that of the

former governor-general, Cen Chunxuan, who reportedly once rebuffed a similar demand by the British. In subsequent proclamations the association stated that it was willing to assume the task of organizing the policing of the areas bordering the river in its fight against piracy. It not only prepared a detailed twelve-point program for that purpose but also tried to raise the capital for a steamship company to compete with the two British boats which ran on the West River.³⁷

The West River episode was only the first of a number of incidents in which the Self-Government Association was visibly involved. It also found itself, for instance, advocating an anti-Japanese boycott in early 1908, when the Japanese government demanded an apology from the Qing government. The dispute occurred after a Qing naval officer and his men seized a consignment of arms aboard the Japanese freighter *Tatsu Maru II* off the coast of the Portuguese enclave of Macao, just to the southwest of Canton, in February. Later in the year the association led a protest against the British and the Portuguese authorities, as neither of them was willing to take action after a Chinese passenger was allegedly kicked to death by a Portuguese ticket collector aboard the local British steamer *Foshan*.³⁸ It was, of course, such activism which brought the Self-Government Association to the attention of both contemporaries and subsequent historians. Furthermore, the correspondence of the Self-Government Association, like the writings of many intellectuals of the time, was filled with the language of the nationalist discourse. In a typical letter addressed to “fellow compatriots” during the West River incident, references were made, for instance, both to sovereign rights (*zhuquan*) and to the fear of dismemberment (*guafen*) of the polity. Echoing the voice of Liang Qichao, the leaders of the Association warned gravely that the Chinese as a people might be so decimated that they could not even become the slaves (*numanuli*) of others, and only through joining together (*lianjietaanti*), as in the case of the Self-Government association itself, would they have a chance to save themselves.³⁹

Still, to position itself as a representative of “society” in the nationalist project, the Self-Government Association was engaged not only in the critique but also in the (re)invention of the “state.” To define itself against the “state,” however, also necessitated the concession of political space to the latter. And the Self-Government Association, like other civic organizations, was thus vulnerable to the counter-criticism that it stepped beyond what was legitimately within its purview. To be sure, it is hardly surprising that, according to a letter from the Foreign Ministry, the gentry elites complained that the behavior of Chen Huipu and his associates was improper and that their conduct during the *Tatsu Maru* incident was “barbaric” (*xingtonghuawai*).⁴⁰ What is worth noting is that the association did seem to concede certain ground to the old guardians of the imperial order. During the one episode in 1909 when the issue of national sovereignty was unambiguously at the forefront—the dispute with the Portuguese government over the boundary of Macao—the Self-Government Association was conspicuously restrained. Instead, it was organizations headed by members of

the gentry that played a leading role in whatever local agitation there was.⁴¹ The deference shown by Chen Huipu and his associates suggests, it seems, that they were willing to step back from the center of the public arena in matters of such magnitude, which they considered to be within the prerogative of the "state." This might also help to explain why the voice of the Self-Government Association, despite its earlier vociferous presence, fell so eerily silent even after the new Provincial Assembly (*ziyiju*) all but excluded the association's members when it came into existence in October 1909.⁴² "Society," as it were, was to be simultaneously the antidote to and intimate partner of the "state" in the nationalist project. And it was through such narrow discursive spaces that Chen Huipu and others both found and lost their voice.

Reconstructing Society

"The rise of 'society'" in 1911, to borrow Li Liangfu's description, did not, of course, lead to the coming together of the Chinese people to form a disciplined nation. If anything, the reverse seems to have occurred: China as a polity was falling apart. In some ways the first decade of the new republic was a paradoxical era. It was a time of apparent economic vibrancy and cultural renewal coupled with social instability and a profound sense of crisis. New industries were founded even as the government fell into complete disarray. And as the political and social landscape of the country was remolded, the public discourse on "society" took a different turn. Prior to the fall of the Qing, the concern of most commentators on the subject was generally to emphasize the need for the people to join together to form collectivities. The term "society" or *shehui* was thus used almost interchangeably with *qun* or *daqun*. The question of how exactly "society" should be constituted was left largely unexplored. What were the mechanisms or forces which drove the formation of "society"? What should the morphology of a vigorous "society" be like? As the crisis of the polity seemingly deepened, intellectuals searched for answers to these questions in an attempt to reinvigorate the ailing republic. The discourse on "society" came to be infused with what can be called the language of "class" (*jieji*).

The compound *jieji* was not, needless to say, new to Chinese writings. It is often found in old Chinese texts. Philip Kuhn has pointed out that the traditional usage of the term referred to social distance or rank rather than groupings, and that it was in the former sense that Liang Qichao first used the term in 1899.⁴³ Still, it is clear that, inspired by the Japanese usage of the compound *kaikyū*, the term *jieji* was used increasingly after the turn of the century to denote the differentiation of social groups. This could cause some confusion, however, particularly in the writings of the late Qing and early republic, as Chinese authors did not always distinguish clearly the different meanings of the term. In an article entitled "On Class Systems" (*Jieji zhidulun*), which was reprinted in *Dongfang zazhi* in 1912, for example, the term *jieji* was first used to describe

simple hierarchical orders which, as the author maintained, existed in places ranging from ancient Greece to India to nineteenth-century United States. But after providing a capsule history of such an order in imperial China, he suddenly turned, without any further explanation, to compare conditions in the Chinese empire to what he considered to be the findings of “Western sociologists” (*xiren zhi yan shehuixue zhe*). The latter, the author claimed, traced the progress (*jinhua*) of the “class system” from slavery to indentured servitude, in turn leading to hired labor, while the reverse was true for China. Disregarding the validity of his assertions, it is evident that the author conflated the meaning of *jieji* as hierarchy with the usage of “class” as a signifier of social formation. To blur the issue still further, he ended the article by suggesting that the institution of a free labor market (*zuogong ziyou zhi zhi*) would bring equality to all people, thus eliminating *jieji zhidu* altogether in the process!⁴⁴

Confusion aside, to many Chinese intellectuals “class analysis,” in the Western sociological sense, did promise to provide insights into the working of “society,” thus facilitating the strengthening of the “nation.” For a clear exposition of the relationship between *jieji* and *shehui*, we need once again to turn to the indefatigable Liang Qichao. If Liang still used the term *jieji* in the traditional manner in 1899, that was no longer the case by 1915. In an enthusiastic endorsement of the works of the German nationalist philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), Liang sought to bring the ideas of the author of the famous *Address to the German Nation* to his Chinese readers. Fichte was one of four sagacious leaders (*zhe*) responsible for the construction of modern Germany, Liang wrote. Only some of his popular pronouncements considered by Liang to be best suited for application to China, however, were selected for discussion. Elaborating on the themes in some of his own earlier writings, Liang, citing the authority of Fichte, emphasized that it was both the nature and duty of man to serve “society.” The “nation,” as the highest form of “society,” thus represented the pinnacle of human ideals.⁴⁵ In a section entitled “Class and the Division of Occupations” (*Jieji yu fenye*), Liang suggested that the differentiation of classes, deriving from occupational divisions, was not only natural and inevitable, but indeed essential for the functioning of “society.” Echoing Fichte’s idea that individuality found its ultimate expression only in the collective, Liang put forward an organic view of “society” in which the role of each person was to contribute to the well-being of the whole. Constituents of “society” should be like members of a military unit, or *shehui juntuan*, working together against the common enemy. Class differentiation was thus absolutely necessary (*biyao*) since different individuals were endowed with different abilities. Yet this should not cause any problem as long as everyone realized that, whatever their station, their task was to work for the good of “society.”⁴⁶

Liang’s discourse contributed further, of course, to the objectification of “society,” which can be dated back to Yan Fu’s writings in the late nineteenth century, as an organic structure. “Society” was no longer simply an amorphous

dagun. It could now literally be dissected and broken down into its constituent "classes." Indeed, for "society"—and thus by extension the "nation"—to be strong, its members, as Liang pointed out, must be organized into different "classes," working together to ensure the health of the organic whole.⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, many intellectuals of the early republic, concerned with the fate of the country, were increasingly inclined to see "society" through the prism of "class." More important, if "society" was not simply a shapeless mass of humanity coming together but was rather systematically constituted with different "classes," it was then also more amenable to methodical dissection and reconstruction. And that was exactly what the apostles of revolution in the post-May Fourth period had in mind. The objective of a revolution, declared the Guomindang theorist Dai Jitao confidently in 1919, was to "reconstruct (*gaizao*) the Chinese nation and society."⁴⁸

The fact that Dai chose to use the active term *gaizao* is significant. The genius of a revolutionary leader, as Dai put it, was to expose the defects in the constitution of "society" (*shehui zuzhi de quexian*).⁴⁹ The impulse to transform the constitution of "society" was undoubtedly further reinforced by the influence of Marxian philosophy, which treats "society" as an object having a positivity of its own.⁵⁰ For instance, in his article "Studies on Class and Morality" (*Jieji yu daode xueshuo*), another leading Guomindang theorist, Hu Hanmin, turned the earlier writing of Liang Qichao on its head. Instead of calling for the people to cultivate their "public morals" so that they would learn to join together to form a *dagun*, Hu maintained that it was *shehui* which determined the morality of the people. In Hu's words, "the survival of the individual and the life of society is inseparable. [If a person] does not recognize the demands of society (*shehui de yaoqiu*), or does not follow the customs of society (*shehui de guanxi*), s/he definitely cannot co-exist with that society (*juebuneng yu na shehui xiangrong*) . . . all societies in history known to us are defined by class (*jieji de shehui*), their so-called morality is always of a class orientation (*jieji de daode*)."⁵¹ "Society," in other words, was a living organism with a subjectivity of its own, its body constituted with different "classes." And individuals, who by definition always articulated themselves in the form of "class," would naturally be rejected by the organism when they failed to follow its rules. Corrective measures, of course, could be applied to the organism. Needless to say the revolutionaries, the Guomindang, and later the Communists saw themselves literally in the role of surgeon, reconstructing the body social—and thus by extension its morality—by operating on its constituent parts.

It is perhaps important to point out that for many Chinese theorists the acceptance of "class" as the defining feature of "society" did not necessarily imply the endorsement of "class conflict" as the ineluctable engine of history.⁵² Echoing the themes of many of his associates, for example, Sun Yat-sen declared in 1921 that one of his objectives for the revolution was to get rid of "class war" (*jieji zhanzheng*).⁵³ What the discourse on "class" offered the revolutionaries was

rather a specific and concrete paradigm for social mapping: a quasi-rational strategy, as it were, to perform their operation on “society” and to mobilize support. It is interesting to note, for instance, that the Proclamation of the First Congress of the reorganized Guomindang in 1924 included, under the rubric of “class,” references to tillers (*nongfu*), workers (*gongren*), and merchants (*shangren*), as well as the intellectual class (*zhishi jieji*), the capitalist class (*zichan jieji*), and the autocratic class (*zhuanzhi jieji*).⁵⁴ And it was the “autocratic class,” of course, which needed to be removed from the body social. Similarly, Chen Duxiu, writing in 1923 in the Communist journal *Xiangdao*, spoke of those who were unproductive riffraff (*wuyeyoumin*) as a nonclass (*fei jiejihua*). They stood, in other words, outside the discourse on “society” and thus the construction of an alliance of multiple classes for the nationalist project.⁵⁵ As the revolution unfolded, boundaries for the “society-and-nation” were constantly redrawn through the discursive reconfiguration of the different “classes.” Philip Kuhn once wrote that even “by the third decade of this century, Chinese thinkers were still having trouble relating the Western concept of class to their own [pre-modern] sense of social organization.”⁵⁶ But rather than dichotomizing a Western versus Chinese concept of “class,” it might be closer to the mark to suggest that, the intrusion of the Marxian notion of “class struggle” notwithstanding, Chinese political and intellectual elites often invoked the language of “class” to signify a creative axis around which a cohesive “society,” and thus a “nation,” could be imagined. A reified “society” intimately inhabited by different “classes” was thus elevated to the center of the public discourse. Indeed, the obsession with “class labels” in the early decades of the People’s Republic was due to more than a flirtation with Marxism. Even for the Chinese Communists, “class conflict” was perhaps as much a reflection of the constitution of “society” as it was the determinant of social dynamics.

Postscript

With the creation of the discipline of social science, the concept of “society,” like that of the “state,” has long established itself as an integral part of the modernist historical narrative. In writings by both the Chinese elites of the twentieth century as well as by historians, the image of “society” often looms large in their narration of the history of modern China. Indeed, there is a general tendency to privilege “society” as an object of analysis. Yet such an approach, it seems to me, often runs the risk of confusing a conceptual device with a complex reality. It might also contribute to the perpetuation of the flawed notion that the history of late Qing and republican China was but a tale of failed historical transition. Historians of the past, of course, often compared China, including the alleged features of its “society,” to Europe. They also often acknowledged, implicitly or explicitly, the narrative of European progress as the standard against which everyone else should be measured. While few in Chinese studies today

will openly endorse such a "Eurocentric" approach, many continue to ground their writings in what Dipesh Chakrabarty calls the "transition narrative,"⁵⁷ anchoring their analyses with themes such as social transformation, the development of civil society/public sphere, the formation of the nation-state, economic progress, class formation, and so on. Chinese history is said to have its own dynamics, but those dynamics are still often ultimately analyzed on grounds established by European history as History. Not surprisingly, "images of aborted transitions" permeate the narration of Chinese history.⁵⁸ The intrusion of Europe as History, in other words, might have become more subtle, but it is undoubtedly with us in Chinese studies and other non-Western fields.

This essay does not pretend to offer any grand solution to such a problem. Rather, it is an exercise which suggests that instead of asking whether "society" has been properly formed to fulfill a certain assigned historical role, one takes the very idea of "society" as a problematic in itself and asks how its articulation in discourse and practice intersects the trajectory of Chinese history. The aim is to recontextualize the processes through which "society" came to dominate the public discourses of the late Qing and early republic, and to get away from writing China as "a figure of lack."⁵⁹ Thus the case of Chen Huipu and the Guangdong Self-Government Association, for instance, should not be read as yet another example of the failed transition to civic power. It was rather an illustration of the productive process which defined the very concept of "society," with all its tensions and contradictions, in practice in Chinese history.

The fact that the Chinese political and intellectual elites were bent on *constructing* a vigorous and cohesive "society" obviously has important implications for the trajectory of twentieth-century China. It is perhaps important to point out that the choice of Liang Qichao's writings as examples here by no means implies an absence of other contesting voices in the discourse on "society." However, Liang's treatises, I believe, did signify an important creative impulse on the part of many Chinese elites: to emancipate and discipline the citizenry *simultaneously* for the nationalist project. And it was on the back of such conflicting impulses that the concept of "society" emerged to occupy a privileged place in the public discourse in China. The discursive chord forged between "society" and "nation," moreover, lent support to the disciplinary activism of the self-proclaimed revolutionaries of subsequent years in defining the constitution of "society." The Communists, in particular, were to engage in an extensive and methodical project of restructuring "society" with the use of coercion and force, often in the name of the "nation."

In recent years, as the legitimacy of the Communist government wanes, some scholars, following the logic of the "transition narrative," have suggested that for contemporary Chinese "society" to realize its emancipatory potential, it needs only to resurrect institutions such as the Self-Government Association and others of the late Qing and early republic. In other words, it should simply regain the lost momentum of its own constitution and complete the once aborted transition.

That remains a seductive view of history, even as it largely sidesteps the specific articulation of “society” through discourse and practice within the Chinese historical context. Indeed, the concept of “society,” as has been suggested in this essay, could just as easily be employed for repression as for emancipation. Toward the latter end, one needs to challenge the foundation of the nationalist project: the vision of an organic “society-and-nation”—that is to say, the very idea of a disciplined and unitary “China” itself.

Notes

An outline of this article was first presented at the 34th International Congress of Asian and North African Studies held in Hong Kong in August 1993. An earlier version was then prepared for the Modern China Seminar at Columbia University in March 1995. I would like to thank the participants on both occasions, particularly Andy Nathan, for their comments. All errors are, of course, my own.

1. Liang Qichao, “Xinminshuo” (On New People), in *Yinbingshi quanji* (Works from the Yinbing Studio) (Taipei, 1989), pp. 12–16.
2. David Strand, “‘Civil Society’ and ‘Public Sphere’ in Modern China: A Perspective on Popular Movements in Beijing, 1919–1989,” *Working Papers in Asian/Pacific Studies*, Asian/Pacific Studies Institute, Duke University, 1990, p. 3; William Rowe, “The Public Sphere in Modern China,” *Modern China*, 16:3 (1990), pp. 325–326.
3. Mary Rankin, “Some Observations on a Chinese Public Sphere,” *Modern China*, 19:2 (1993), pp. 172–173. Two recent publications have also raised issues which are relevant to the problems under discussion here; see Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History From the Nation* (Chicago, 1995), and John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture and Class in the Nationalist Revolution* (Stanford, 1996). Also relevant is Lydia Liu’s exploration of the discourse of individualism. Liu challenges the conventional dichotomy drawn between the state and individual rights in modern Chinese history. The notion of *geren*, she argues, was constituted in part for the goals of liberation and national revolution. “In that sense, despite its apparent clash with the nation-state, the discourse of individualism finds itself in complicity with nationalism.” See Liu, “Translingual Practice: The Discourse of Individualism between China and the West,” *Positions*, 1:1 (1993), p. 179.
4. Tom Nairn, “The Modern Janus,” *New Left Review*, no. 94 (1975), pp. 3–29.
5. Craig Calhoun, “Civil Society and the Public Sphere,” *Public Culture*, 5:2 (1993), pp. 275–276.
6. Philip Huang, “The Paradigmatic Crisis in Chinese Studies,” *Modern China*, 17:3 (1991), pp. 320–322; Frederic Wakeman, Jr., “The Civil Society and Public Sphere Debate,” *Modern China*, 19:2 (1993), pp. 133–134.
7. See, for example, Bryna Goodman, “The Locality as Microcosm of the Nation?” *Modern China*, 21:4 (1995), pp. 387–419.
8. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, 1958), pp. 38–49.
9. Eric Wolf, “Inventing Society,” *American Ethnologists*, 15:4 (1988), pp. 752–753; Siu-lun Wong, *Sociology and Socialism in Contemporary China* (London, 1979), pp. 1–2; Norbert Elias, *What Is Sociology?*, trans. Stephen Mennell and Grace Morrissey (New York, 1978), pp. 33–49.
10. Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914* (New York, 1989), p. 273.
11. Mizoguchi Yūzō, “Chūgoku no kō, shi” (Chinese concepts of public and private), *Bungaku*, no. 10 (1988), p. 78; Benjamin Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power* (Cambridge, MA, 1964), pp. 56–57.

12. Wong, *Sociology and Socialism in Contemporary China*, p. 5.
13. Liang, "Xinminshuo," pp. 1–12. Also see Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890–1907* (Cambridge, MA, 1971), pp. 149–219.
14. *Sanmin zhuyi* (The three people's principles), (Taipei, 1979), p. 48; Liang Qichao, "Shizhong dexing xiangfan xiangcheng yi" (The meaning of the opposition and complementarity of ten moral qualities), in *Yinbingshi wenji* (Collected Essays from the Yinbing Studio) (Taipei, 1960), 5, p. 44.
15. Liang, "Xinminshuo," p. 81.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
18. Liang Qichao, "Xianzheng qianshuo" (On Constitutionalism), in *Yinbingshi wenji*, 23, p. 42.
19. Adam Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society* (New York, 1992), pp. 25–44.
20. Liang, "Xinminshuo," pp. 79–80.
21. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA, 1989), p. 12.
22. Wakeman, "The Civil Society and Public Sphere Debate," p. 121.
23. *Yueshang weichi gonganhui tongrenlu* (The membership roster of the Guangdong Merchant Association for the Maintenance of Public Order) (Guangzhou, 1912).
24. Li Henggao and Yu Shaoshan, "Yueshang zizihui yu Yueshang weichi gonganhui" (The Guangdong Merchant Self-Government Association and the Guangdong Merchant Association for the Maintenance of Public Order), in *Guangzhou wenshi ziliao* (Source materials on the history and culture of Canton) (Guangzhou, 1963), 7, pp. 21–36; Wang Yunsheng, *Liushinianlai Zhongguo yu Riben* (sixty years of relations between China and Japan) (Beijing, 1980), 5, p. 159.
25. Deng Yusheng, *Quanyue shehui shilu* (A veritable record of Guangdong Society) (Guangzhou, 1910), 2, p. 1a.
26. *Ibid.*; Li and Yu, "Yueshang zizihui yu Yueshang weichi gonganhui," p. 21.
27. The nine were Runshenshe (f. 1869), Aiyou shantang (f. 1871), Liangyue Guangren shantang (f. 1890), Guangji yiyuan (f. 1892), Fangbian (f. 1894), Chongzheng shantang (f. 1896), Shushan shantang (f. 1897), Mingshan shantang (f. 1898), and Huixing shanyuan (f. 1900).
28. Deng, *Quanyue shehui shilu*, 1, pp. 2a-2b, 3, p. 1a.
29. Edward Rhoads, "Nationalism and Xenophobia in Kwangtung (1905–1906): The Canton Anti-American Boycott and the Lienchow Anti-Missionary Uprising," *Papers on China*, 16, p. 166.
30. *Zhonghuaminguo kaiguo wushinian wenxian* (geming yuanliu yu geming yundong) (Documents from the first fifty years of the Republic of China [The course of the revolution and the revolutionary movement]) (Taipei, 1965), 16: 1, pp. 648–660; He Yuefu, "Guangdong shishen zai Qingmo xianzheng zhong de zhengzhi dongxiang" (Political tendencies of the Guangdong gentry during constitutional rule in the late Qing), *Jindaishi yanjiu*, 34:4 (1986), pp. 35–36; Edward Rhoads, *China's Republican Revolution: The Case of Kwangtung* (Cambridge, MA, 1975), pp. 93–94.
31. Qiu Jie, "Xinhai geming shiqi de Yueshang zizihui" (The Guangdong Merchant Self-Government Association and the 1911 Revolution) in *Jinian Xinhai geming qishi zhounian qingnian xueshu taolunhui lunwenxuan* (Selected conference essays by younger scholars commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the 1911 Revolution) (Beijing, 1983), 2, p. 376. Note that Qiu mistakenly identifies Chen Huipu and Chen Jijian as two different persons.
32. Deng, *Quanyue shehui shilu*, 4, pp. 3b-4a.
33. *Ibid.*, 5, pp. 1a-8a. Note how the place of each successive meeting ascended in

accordance to the hierarchy of social institutions (Fangbian-Aiyu-Wenlan) in Canton, with each meeting attended by more senior officials than the one before.

34. Ibid., 5, p. 4b.
35. See *Yueshang zizihui hanjian chubian* (A Preliminary collection of the correspondence of the Guangdong Merchant Self-Government Association) (Guangzhou, 1908).
36. Deng, *Quanyue shehui shilu*, 6, pp. 1b-3a.
37. *Yueshang zizihui hanjian chubian*, pp. 11a-12a, 18b-19b, 50a-50b.
38. Rhoads, *China's Republican Revolution*, pp. 136-143; Deng, *Quanyue shehui shilu*, 6, p. 1a; *Dongfang zazhi*, 6:3 (1909) (jishi), pp. 19-23.
39. *Yueshang zizihui hanjian chubian*, pp. 18b-19b.
40. Wang, *Liushinianlai Zhongguo yu Riben*, 5, pp. 159-160.
41. *Dongfang zazhi*, 6:4 (1909) (jishi), 53-60; 6:5 (1909) (jishi), pp. 127-134.
42. The association had earlier established its own Institute for the Study of Self-Government (*Yueshang zizhi yanjiusuo*), which offered, among others, classes in Mandarin (Deng, *Quanyue shehui shilu*, 6, p. 4b). The fear of revealing the value of one's property undoubtedly accounted in part for the low level of participation in the election by potential constituents of the Self-Government Association. Still, it is worth pondering why the Association accepted the complete domination of the Provincial Assembly by gentry members with such apparent equanimity.
43. Philip Kuhn, "Chinese Views of Social Classification," in James Watson, ed., *Class and Social Stratification in Post-Revolutionary China* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 17-18.
44. *Dongfang zazhi*, 9:1 (1912) (neiwei shibao), pp. 24-27. The article was originally published in *Minquanbao*.
45. Liang Qichao, "Feisi de rensheng tianzhi lun shuping" (An account of and comments on Fichte's ideas on life's unequivocal duties), in *Yinbingshi wenji*, 32, pp. 70-71. While the essay was meant to introduce Fichte to the Chinese reader, Liang said explicitly in the preface that he freely interpreted and elaborated on Fichte's pronouncements with his own ideas.
46. Ibid., pp. 84-88.
47. One should point out that Liang himself later became quite disenchanted with the discourse of "class." In an article written in 1925, Liang stated that Chinese society should perhaps be divided into the productive class (*youye jieji*) and the nonproductive class (*wuye jieji*). He poked fun at self-proclaimed revolutionaries by recounting an earlier occasion in which he was supposed to address workers and tillers. Instead he met only their so-called representatives from the ranks of the revolutionaries whom Liang obviously considered to belong to the undesirable nonproductive class. See Liang, "Wuchan jieji yu wuye jieji" (The property-less class and the non-productive class), in *Yinbingshi wenji*, 42, pp. 1-2.
48. Dai Chuanxian (Dai Jitao), "Geming! Hegu? Weihe?" (Revolution! Why? For what?), *Jianshe*, 1:3 (1919), p. 30.
49. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
50. See Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (New York, 1990), p. 90.
51. Hu Hanmin, "Jieji yu daode xueshuo" (Class and moral theories), *Jianshe*, 1:6 (1919), pp. 1-4.
52. See Arif Dirlik, *The Origins of Chinese Communism* (New York, 1989), pp. 121-141.
53. *Sun Zhongshan quanji* (The collected works of Sun Zhongshan [Sun Yat-sen]), (Beijing, 1985), 5: p. 460.

54. *Zhongguo Guomindang diyierci quanguo daibiao dahui huiyi shiliao* (Source materials on the First and Second Party Congresses of the Chinese Nationalist Party) (Jiangsu guji, 1986), 1, pp. 81, 85.
55. Reprinted in *Liudayiqian* (Before the Sixth Congress [of the Chinese Communist Party]) (Beijing, 1980), p. 54.
56. Kuhn, "Chinese Views of Social Classification," p. 20.
57. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for "Indian" Pasts?" *Representations*, 37 (1992), p. 4.
58. See Gyan Prakash, "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism," *American Historical Review*, 99:5 (1994), p. 1485.
59. Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History," p. 6.

Liang Qichao and the Notion of Civil Society in Republican China

Peter Zarrow

After the Revolution of 1911, the famous intellectual Liang Qichao (1873–1929) quickly abandoned his support for constitutional monarchism and became a participant in the politics of the early republic. He also became a supporter of republicanism, even though he retained all of his earlier doubts about the wisdom of precipitous democratization. Liang reconciled his beliefs in the necessity of gradual evolution and elitism with his beliefs in parliamentary institutions and checks on autocracy through a set of concepts analogous to the contemporary sense of “civil society.”

Liang was interested in the formal mechanisms of republicanism. He did not use the term “civil society,” and insofar as civil society is defined in terms of institutions or social groups intermediary between the state and private life, it was of secondary concern to Liang. Nonetheless, in thinking about the kind of fundamental laws which ought to apply to the China of his day, Liang favored much we now associate with the flourishing of civil society and liberal democracy: limiting state power; defining the freedoms, rights, and responsibilities of individual citizens; maintaining rational and orderly public debate; and, in the most urgent way, encouraging voluntary associations which might legitimately seek to influence the state. Much of this might fall under the general rubric of constitutionalism, but the notion of civil society is both more suggestive and more accurate than other labels that have been attached to Liang. He came to a new understanding that neither remaking the psychology of the people nor adjusting state institutions could by themselves make China strong. He came to a third area of concern: civil institutions, such as political parties, a strong press, schools, and the like. He also placed a new emphasis on civility and rational debate.

Liang was neither a “liberal” in any ideological sense of the word nor was he a “Confucian.” The very fact that Liang has been categorized under both of these quite disparate labels indicates that neither can satisfactorily encapsulate his thought, though of course his ideas owed much both to classical Western liberalism and to Confucianism. “Civil society,” although somewhat anachronistic, succeeds in epitomizing a major aspect of Liang’s political thought in the 1910s. The institutions and attitudes of civil society could foster citizenship.

It was the failures of the early Republic that forced Liang to consider fundamental political questions he had hitherto been able to ignore. By 1916 Liang had developed a notion of overlapping realms of orderly administration and calm public debate based on a shared sense of the rules of the game, the need to balance state and society, and a view of the healthy nation as dependent on both.¹ The New Culture movement as a whole was defined largely by a general interest in utopian democracy. Against this background, Liang’s desire to make the republic work was both typical and, insofar as his ideas were rooted more deeply in Chinese reality than much of the naive optimism of the day, unusual. Between 1912 and 1915 Liang had been chiefly concerned with the “mechanics” of government (for example, the precise relationship between the legislative and executive branches), and he was concerned with policymaking, but as Yuan Shikai’s monarchical movement loomed in 1915, Liang refocused his attention on the more fundamental questions of how the government as such could be given a legitimate basis and—even more tellingly—how healthy and effective government in China required a political sphere exclusively dominated neither by the state nor by social forces.

Roughly speaking, over his lifetime Liang’s political ideas moved through five phases: basic reform (*bianfa*) from 1895 to 1898; a more radical and democratic analysis from 1898 to about 1903; and then from the early 1900s to the 1911 Revolution disassociation from radicalism and a call for constitutional monarchism and even “enlightened despotism.”² Fourth, from the founding of the republic to 1918, Liang was involved—immersed, even—in politics, and his abandoning politics in that year was a kind of watershed for him. But the 1910s also marked a new sophistication in Liang’s political views. Liang had accepted the fall of the Qing as a chance to build a strong central government managed by a strong executive branch.³ This would be an activist government dedicated to strengthening the country and raising the level of the people. Liang faced up to the antidemocratic implications of his ideals, locating sovereignty (*zhuquan*) in the state (*guojia*) rather than the people (or the ruler)—while at the same time trying to make the republic work on ultimately democratic principles. He favored emphasizing “statism in order to cure the faults of democracy.”⁴

Another way of looking at this is to say that Liang was concerned with the *mechanics* of government: with its effectiveness, not its moral or even social basis. Like other realistic commentators on democracy, Liang expected a political elite to emerge if only because pure majoritarianism was but a myth. He

seems to have hoped this elite would in some sense represent the majority and certainly thought that if everything worked correctly, ordinary people would respect and emulate the elite. Political parties were to provide the locus of populace-elite interaction. Liang's "elitism" may have been a simple recognition of the political fact that decisions will always be made by minorities, but his goal was more to remind the radicals of the inherent limits on democracy as a form of government than to develop, say, a vanguard theory of government (which would have required looking at questions beyond the state structure). It is true that in his important essay, "The Three Great Essences of Constitutionalism," written in late 1912, Liang emphasized "civic" or political rights, but here he was attacking pure majoritarianism.⁵ The essay represents Liang's appreciation of formal democracy, and he tried to find a balance between the rights of the individual and those of the state.

Indeed, with the revolution still fresh Liang was more confident of the rights of the people in 1912 than the rights of the state. He agonized over a conundrum: China seemed too large to be a republic while the revolution had shown autocracy to be equally impractical. Against the possibility of overcentralization leading to despotism, he wanted the legislature to have the right of impeachment. But to prevent too many checks on the executive, he would allow the president to disband the legislature and call for new elections. If the government lost these elections, *then* it would have to resign. Liang was looking for a balance between legislative (we might say democratic, in a sense) and executive powers, but it was a balance weighted toward the latter. He explicitly abjured the examples of the United States and France, leaning, we can see, more toward Bismarck and Meiji—and explicitly taking the party cabinets of Britain as a model. But the main point here is that in urging particular solutions for the role of political parties, the responsibilities of the cabinet, the powers of the legislature, and so forth, Liang took for granted the legitimacy and the goals of the state as well as its social base.

Of course, throughout these years Liang was also engaged in a quest for personal power, for the ability to put his ideas—percolating now for decades—into practice. His Progressive Party (Jinbudang) had little electoral success, but Liang served Yuan Shikai as Minister of Justice and head of the Bureau of Currency. His ideas about how the government should be organized were surely related to his political ambitions,⁶ but whatever the exact mix of nationalism, democracy, and personal ambition at play here, Liang—precisely in accepting the Revolution of 1911—did not question the *basis* of the government which emerged out of that revolution.

Toward a Definition of "Civil Society"

The question of whether China had historically produced or was, in the late imperial era before the onslaught of Western imperialism, in the process of

producing a “civil society” or a “public sphere” or elements of one or the other of these two somewhat vague entities has recently received much scholarly attention and argument.⁷ The twentieth century may seem irrelevant to many of the controversies surrounding the issue, especially whether China was developing or had developed any kind of public sphere before the onslaught of Western imperialism, though the issue is controversial in part precisely because of its bearing on the democratization of contemporary China. Those who deny the applicability of “civil society” to traditional China, whether right or wrong, cannot assume the concept is inapplicable to the twentieth century. Yet the relevance of “civil society” to China is doubly questionable. Not only does it seem to be applying a uniquely Western construct to a profoundly different set of historical conditions, but also its teleological implications, as the development of civil society is associated with the birth of democracy in Western Europe, are at least as dubious. Few would argue that China was heading toward capitalist, liberal democracy; however, “civil society” may also provide terms of analysis useful in examining a set of conditions without implying democratic trends. Analytically, civil society and democracy need to be carefully distinguished, and the contingent nature of any connections between them emphasized.

Whether or not one finds “civil society” or elements thereof in historical or contemporary China, attempts to apply the concept have already produced significant research. This alone is justification enough to discuss civil society in China. Furthermore, such discussion is unavoidable; civil society is of interest to Chinese as well as foreign intellectuals. The re-emergence of the concept of civil society in the late twentieth century, of course, stems from the anti-Communist movements in Eastern Europe. The 1970s and 1980s saw Polish and Czech intellectuals turning to “civil society” to explain and foster their ability to resist, influence, and ultimately overthrow their governments. “Civil society” was thus both a matter of self-reflection and a prescription for political change. In this context, it is clear that a working definition of civil society has to focus on a realm of public associations reasonably free from state domination but not self-enclosed entities, themselves able to influence (though not dominate) the state. Such associations must combine self-interest and a sense of private élan with a disinterested concern for the nation as a whole and a dedication to “civility.” This implies real but not necessarily constitutional or formal limits on the state while at the same time is premised on the existence of an effective state to preserve public order. Perhaps a full-fledged civil society, like democracy in its full meaning, can never exist but will always remain an ideal. As an analytical tool, however, “civil society” points to a particular pattern of state-society interactions.

Any search for a uniquely Chinese form of civil society must focus on eras earlier than the twentieth century. The enormous changes of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries may have ended whatever developments in this

area were underway in the late imperial era.⁸ Historical discontinuity in this view thus renders Western-influenced formulations irrelevant to earlier epochs just as whatever may have been occurring in earlier eras may be irrelevant to contemporary China. The second focus of discussion about civil society has centered on the post-Mao “democracy movement,” especially the social conditions which produced the Tiananmen Square demonstrations of 1989. Again, historical discontinuity suggests that the roots of contemporary civil society are rather shallow.

Be that as it may, the late Qing and the early republic were transitional eras when traditional thought and institutions mixed with new. This made for a very complex and changeable situation, and it also suggests that historical discontinuity should not be exaggerated. On the one hand, there is clearly a world of difference between the political culture of the 1910s and that of the 1990s; on the other, it is possible, as David Strand has argued, that the forces behind modern civil society in China were born in the collapse of the Qing and the rise of republicanism.⁹ A combination of chaotic conditions and revolutionary dictatorship suppressed those forces but never entirely eliminated them or the conditions which produced them. The effort to locate relevant historical continuities cannot focus on specific institutions: the local elites which came to prominence in some areas in the nineteenth century are no more; the chambers of commerce of the 1920s have disappeared; unions and professional associations lost their independence. Nonetheless, the political attitudes, behavioral expectations, and moral visions which might underlie a civil society may not have changed so completely. Although “civil society” can hardly be reduced to intellectuals, their role in shaping public opinion, in holding social trends and government policies up to criticism, and in sustaining a sense of the common national and human experience are nonetheless crucial to the creation and maintenance of a civil society.

Liang Qichao’s writings help illuminate the question of the intellectual roots of civil society in modern China. He was a member of the last generation to be thoroughly imbued in the classics as well as both the Neo-Confucian commentaries tested on the civil service exams and the textual studies movement of the Qing—as well as a leader in China’s exploration of Western thought, history, culture, and institutions. The following generations were increasingly divorced from the world of traditional scholarship. Therefore, a study of Liang can throw light both backward onto traditional perspectives and forward onto the potential of China to develop democracy today. How he saw such institutions as, say, the censorate or the academies from the viewpoint of China’s needs as of 1900 has great interest today. Similarly, how a man of his background and education judged, say, electoral systems or the modern press has implications for contemporary Chinese thinkers as well as resonances among them. If Liang was able to envision civil society, this does not mean China did or could have one; still, it would at least show what was conceptually possible.

Liang's Defense of the Republic

The Revolution of 1911 had overthrown the Qing, but it was not clear in the 1910s that the monarchy itself had been destroyed. Monarchists supporting Yuan Shikai moved into the open in the summer of 1915, with the publication of an article by Frank J. Goodnow, Yuan's American political adviser, which argued that China was more suitable to be a monarchy than a republic.¹⁰ Earlier, in April, Yang Du (1875–1931) had published "A Constitutional Monarchy Will Save the Nation."¹¹ Adopting the position held by Liang Qichao in the early 1900s and followed by countless political thinkers and power holders in the 1930s, Yang wrote that China was too weak and poor to afford such a "luxurious" and advanced form of government as republicanism. The developmental stage best suited to encouraging further progress in China was therefore a constitutional monarchy. Republicanism could follow once the people had become educated and habituated to legal norms and procedures and the economy modernized. Yang denied that he favored an autocratic monarchy, but there was no doubt of his intention to prepare the way for Yuan to become emperor. Yang based his argument on the current chaos surrounding Chinese political institutions. Then in August the monarchist movement was given concrete form in the Peace Planning Society (Chouanhui). The society repeated Goodnow's and Yang's attacks on republicanism while proclaiming that its goal was merely to "study" the feasibility of changing China back to a monarchy.

There was a certain coyness to all this, which allowed Yuan publicly to preserve a semblance of neutrality. He would just let the people decide. However, Yuan ordered his provincial officials to "elect" representatives to a special assembly which, meeting in Beijing in October, voted unanimously to change the "national polity" (*guoti*) from a republic to an empire. Then in December the National Assembly, again unanimously, begged Yuan to assume the throne. The new dynasty was officially proclaimed on January 1, 1916, though actual enthronement was delayed and in fact never occurred. Military opposition, centered in Yunnan and parts of Sichuan and Guangxi, began at the end of December, and Yuan died the following June, the southwest in stalemate and his government besieged.

The crux of Liang's argument against a Yuan monarchy was that changing the basic form of government—the national polity—would be inherently destabilizing while offering no solutions to China's real problems. The monarchical movement thus prompted Liang to realize he had made a mistake in taking for granted the goals and especially the legitimacy of government in the early republic. In rebutting the claims that China needed a monarchy and indeed that under a monarchy China could build a constitutional order, Liang emphasized that the real issue was how government was conducted, not its ultimate form or *guoti*. The key issue was constitutionalism—a set of accepted, orderly procedures for demarcating power—and in principle either a monarchy or a republic could be

based on a constitution. However, radical change of the national polity inevitably led to instability, which threatened constitutionalism. The Chinese Republic therefore should not be altered.

In contrast to the national polity (*guoti*), “political institutions” or “political forms” (*zhengti*) referred to actual, specific kinds of governments. Conversely, autocratic and constitutional monarchies shared a monarchical national polity just as a republican national polity could include real democracy or its merest semblance.¹² Liang argued that progressive reform, or changes in political institutions, were always possible within a given polity. Liang’s understanding of the national polity as he expressed it in 1915 was essentially a matter of respect for the law or, more broadly, the established order within which change should be pursued according to the rules. This was not a new opinion, of course, but now China actually had a written Constitution.

I had assumed that if China really wanted to put a constitution into practice [as the monarchists claimed to want], we need only treat the new provisional constitution as sacred, to seek the execution of its every word, and to do nothing outside of the law. One aspect of this would be to pass laws to bring the people closer to political participation (*zhengzhi zhi jihui*) without blocking their wisdom, obstructing their abilities, damaging their enjoyments, or harming their integrity. If this were practiced for a few years, we would certainly see results.¹³

On one level the meaning of this passage is perfectly obvious and rather plaintive. Liang is hoping that everybody will obey the constitution, but he has nothing to say about why they should or how they could be made to. And he hopes that the backward Chinese people can gradually be made less backward and so more capable of assuming political responsibilities—one day. Yet on another level, the passage hints at Liang’s belief that it is precisely a constitutional order that provides room for political contestation—or at least constitutes the source of political space—without threatening the nation itself. He does not, in other words, see the promise of constitutionalism as providing consensus or discovering the general will. Reviewing the history of the Republic at the end of 1916, Liang warned against extremism. This was an old peeve of his, of course, but he commented here that struggle for power between various factions, though unavoidable, was not necessarily evil. It simply had to be conducted within certain bounds. Each faction should struggle to extend its own strength while tolerating the existence of the others.¹⁴ Those who transgressed the bounds would inevitably meet with defeat as reaction against them built up. Thus did Liang recognize the political legitimacy of dispute. Tolerance for those who disagreed with one became a key to modern politics for Liang—and equally a matter of self-preservation since the effort to stamp out opposition would prove fatal. Tolerance was ultimately necessary for the improvement of the nation:

When China has a number of different forces trying to obtain dictatorial powers and eliminate their rivals all at same time, this is an absolutely impossible task. There are only two possible ways to deal with the situation. One is to allow free competition within bounds to eliminate the weaker naturally. The other is mutual tolerance and mutual contacts. The two sides may be extremely different, but they will gradually change and come closer together. The function of modern constitutional governments lies in their ability to order the nation while still progressing.¹⁵

Liang was trying to suggest avenues toward compromise. Moving away from a focus on government, Liang emphasized that national unity itself depended upon tolerance. In a letter to Yuan trying to warn him away from the monarchist movement, Liang noted: “Political participation and patriotism are closely related. It is impossible to have citizens who share in the joys and sorrows of the nation if they cannot express their political opinions.”¹⁶ Liang thus urged Yuan to encourage expression of public opinion. If he suppressed it, it would turn poisonous. Putting the case in Confucian terms, Liang insisted that if people in power governed for selfish purposes, they would inevitably defeat themselves. “We have learned that governing to deal with problems through coercive methods is not sufficient but only leads to self-destruction.” Indeed, Liang proclaimed that working sincerely for the sake of the country would obviate the need for using force while the use of coercion was itself proof of selfish intent.¹⁷

Coercive methods were dangerous for those who used them. In Liang’s historical judgment, no one understood the ways of force better than Yuan Shikai, but his use of coercion was bringing him to his doom. The rules of the game—the law, the constitutional order, tolerance—for Liang thus protected the players as well as the nation generally. Tolerance was the price of self-protection as well as a means of encouraging public opinion and fostering unity. One may note the instrumentality of these views.¹⁸ However, they represent an attempt to get at the roots of what would make republicanism work.

Liang’s republicanism was both conditional and tenacious. No “national polity” was absolute for Liang. The key issue was constitutionalism, not the precise form of the constitution or the basis of government. It was because of this flexibility that Liang could accept the revolution—unlike, say, Kang Youwei. Precisely because he disapproved of revolution, having seen the collapse of the old order, Liang could not accept another revolution to try to restore it. Thus he became a committed republican while he saw the entire republicanism versus monarchism debate as a struggle over a false issue. “Looked at calmly, regardless of the type of national polity, either [republicanism or monarchism] is capable of achieving order and either is capable of falling into chaos.” Liang felt that immediate political circumstances formed 90 percent of the causes of disorder, though it nonetheless remained true that: “If the national polity and national conditions are not in correspondence, then the triggers leading to disorder are numerous and easy to set off.”¹⁹ Republicanism was neither the cure for China’s

problems nor the disease itself, but simply a largely neutral political framework. The real issue for Liang was that changing the fundamental nature of the polity was itself an act of disorder. It was therefore entirely logical for Liang to insist that it was Yuan, not he, who was the true rebel or traitor in the military struggle that broke out at the end of 1915.

Liang's fear of disruption was based on his "organic" conception of the nation. China was an organism whose discrete parts fit together in a rather delicate way. Liang especially feared the effect of artificial, forced (*renwei de*) change. He condemned the monarchists as destructive precisely because they were criticizing and attacking a republic already suffering from plenty of problems. The chief evil of the Yuan monarchy was that it was, quite literally, extra-constitutional. He asked the proponents of monarchism:

Furthermore, have you read the provisional constitution? Have you read the provisional penal code? the laws on assembly and organizations? the press laws? Have you read the presidential orders promulgated over the last year regarding throwing the national polity into disorder? And if you are aware of the duty of citizens to respect the constitution and laws, how can you arouse the mob outside of government and incite revolution? . . . I cannot predict what kind of order might emerge from your plans, but all the institutions we have now will be destroyed by you. If you say one can have a state (*guo*) without institutions, how can I respond?²⁰

Conversely, Liang did not condemn monarchism as a theory; republicanism and monarchism were equivalent. It was revolution which was wrong. A monarchist revolution in 1915 would only augment, not reverse the problems created by the republican revolution of 1911. Liang stressed that this stance was fully compatible with his pre-1911 position, which found constitutional monarchism only relatively more suitable for China than republicanism, the point then as now being the development of constitutional norms. Liang tried to rebut monarchist accusations that his newfound republicanism represented a change of heart and betrayed his earlier principles. Granted that Liang had switched from the monarchist to the constitutionalist camp, there was much justification for Liang's defense of himself. But Liang's stance in 1915 did not in fact represent only his desire for stability. He understood that the Revolution of 1911 had accomplished certain tasks and was irreversible. At the time of the revolution Liang stressed that it was an "intellectual revolution" in addition to being a political and racial revolution.²¹ It had changed people's ideas about government.

Liang pointed out that monarchies were not entirely rational. They depended on a kind of magic, itself produced by long historical usage, to maintain a sense of awe (*zunyan*). Although immaterial, this awesomeness becomes a force in its own right. It becomes a tool monarchs can use. "But this awesomeness must never be tarnished. Once tarnished, it can never be revived."²² Once people decide their gods are ineffective, they no longer worship them. There is no road

back from republicanism. Although new beliefs and specifically democratic attitudes and habits had hardly taken root, Liang observed that age-old dogmas had been overthrown. The central task of the republic was to educate the Chinese people in democratic principles and habits. Monarchism, then, was not only disruptive; also, it had become literally unthinkable—that is, the habits of mind which could privilege the king had been broken in China. Reflecting on the history of the Republic at the end of 1916, Liang concluded, “We must know that today China is in a transitional period. All sorts of chaotic phenomena in fact stem from the transformative material and spiritual stimuli from abroad. Society is rapidly displaying new forms and the old dogmas passed down through the years are gradually losing the force they used to carry.” For Liang, the attempt to cure China’s problems with a “return to antiquity” (*fugu*) simply could not work, as events showed.²³

Republicanism: Laws and Leaders

Why, then, was the republic in so much trouble? Perhaps surprisingly, Liang explicitly denied that the system was to blame. Of course, he could hardly blame the system if his goal was to defend the republic, though Liang was usually attuned to the influence of institutions. In any case, he here blamed corrupt and incompetent officials, in order to emphasize that the critics of the republic were blaming the system without proposing to change its personnel.²⁴ As he put it in 1917, “The fault truly lies in the people and not in the laws.”²⁵ Without serious reform of the people, a new *guoti* would do no good. People used to blame the Qing monarchy and now they blamed the Republic, Liang said, but neither was the central issue. It was the failure of China’s political elites that struck Liang as key.

I had supposed that there were many reasons why China was not able to establish a constitution at this time. Some lie in local conditions. Some lie in the governmental mentality. Some lie in the customs and abilities of the people. But these causes did not emerge from following republicanism and so they cannot be eliminated by abolishing republicanism. For example, absolutely no one, from the top leader on down through the native and foreign, large and small officials of independent bureaus, wants to be bound strictly by laws. They feel that a free hand would be more convenient. This is precisely the great hindrance to establishing constitutional order.²⁶

Conversely, it was incumbent on the anti-monarchs to behave correctly. Liang wrote Cai E, the general leading the campaign against Yuan in Sichuan and Liang’s former pupil, in the beginning of 1916 to remind Cai that their job was to prove China’s readiness for republicanism and to serve as models. Purity of heart and lack of selfish ambitions were therefore the order of the day.²⁷ According to Liang’s version of the events, a version which was published as soon as the struggle against Yuan began, Liang and Cai started planning their

response the day after the Chouanhui was formed. Liang claimed that he told Cai, “My responsibility will be propaganda (*yanlun*) and thus I must immediately begin writing a devastating essay to oppose [Yuan’s schemes]. You have great power in the military sphere and so you should go into hiding in order to avoid provoking [Yuan’s] fears.”²⁸ In a 1922 speech recounting these events, Liang said that he took the monarchists’ own early declarations as the starting point for his rebuttals—which became the rallying focus for the anti-monarchists.²⁹ Yuan offered him 200,000 yuan not to publish “How Strange! The So-called Problem of the National Polity”; Liang declined and sent a copy to Yuan. Ignoring Yuan’s threats, he persisted in trying to persuade Yuan away from monarchism.³⁰ Liang said he had sent Yuan a copy of the essay asking the messenger to tell Yuan it represented his “loyal counsel” (*zhonggao*). But Liang was in fact ready to oppose Yuan to the end. “We felt that if we did not take the responsibility of opposing the traitor upon ourselves, the republic of China would be henceforth lost.”³¹ And in this spirit of republican virtue, Liang reports Cai as swearing just before he left to lead the rebellion: “‘If we are successful, we will not struggle for high position. If we fail, we will not flee abroad.’”³²

The creation of a heroic saga for propaganda purposes should not obscure the fact that Liang was indeed actively involved at considerable personal risk in the campaigns against Yuan. Liang was not criticizing monarchism from the sidelines, and he was aware of the realpolitik of republican politics. As Liang looked ahead to a post-Yuan China, he hoped that Cai E would remain in Sichuan to create a base for the Progressive Party.³³ But if one of the lessons Liang had learned over the course of the anti-Yuan struggle was the necessity of military backing, he was unable to utilize that knowledge, for Cai E was dying of throat cancer over the summer of 1916.

In his “negotiations” with Yuan, Liang was trying to warn Yuan away from the monarchical movement even as he prepared his own case for the Republic. Above all, he was concerned about the attitudes of the political elite. When Liang suggested that education in democracy was a great need, he was not just referring to the unwashed masses. He directly told Yuan that the president was in danger of losing the trust of the people as the monarchical movement spread. Perhaps more critically, Liang stated, “The law, if preserved by the mutual trust of both superiors and inferiors, can be reconstituted and never fail. But once laws lose their efficacy the people lack a standard and the prestige (legitimacy, *weixin*) of government will collapse.”³⁴ The “law” here referred both to Yuan’s presidential oath and to the basic principles of the Republic. Liang had already gone a long way in tolerating Yuan’s steady aggrandizement of legal powers since 1912. For Liang, the so-called Second Revolution of 1913, a brief military uprising against Yuan in the south, had been exactly that, while Yuan’s suppression of the uprising had been within the bounds of the law, or at least of the political system with Yuan at its center. Liang still read Yuan as the only man who could hold the state together.

In other words, as long as Yuan left the pretense of republican institutions in place, Liang could maintain some hope in the prospect of reviving them some day. But when Yuan moved to abolish them entirely, Liang refused to contemplate compromise with him. Even when Yuan moved to abandon the monarchy in the spring of 1916 in return for remaining president, Liang continued to insist upon Yuan's removal and the punishment of the leaders of the monarchist movement—all this in accord with Liang's faith in basic republican institutions. He wanted the provisional constitution restored and the national assembly of 1913 reconvened.³⁵ In the event, Li Yuanhong became Acting President, as Liang insisted he should: but the era of unabashed warlordism was dawning and just about a year later the new government collapsed, a collapse symbolized by the Pu Yi restoration.

What was at stake for Liang Qichao in the defense of the republic? Liang was, in one of his roles, a professional politician, and at least in theory, the republic offered politicians a larger role than they would play in even a constitutional monarchy.³⁶ Liang may have also been motivated by growing personal and political frustrations with Yuan.³⁷ As well, Liang may have been thinking about his historical reputation; he used his role in the National Salvation Movement to bolster his progressive credentials for the rest of his life.

Liang nonetheless began the summer of 1915 hoping he could still persuade Yuan to suppress the monarchical movement. He visited Yuan with one of Yuan's key supporters, General Feng Guozhang, in June, and they secured a promise from Yuan not to pursue the monarchy. Liang and others were thus engaged in remonstrance into late 1915. Well into the winter, Liang hoped to shore up Yuan's prestige and authority—as long as he remained president. The notion of some scholars that Liang was advising Yuan to wait for a more propitious time to pursue his monarchist goals is contradicted by all the evidence.³⁸ Liang never turned away from republicanism, at least as he defined it. If Liang's famous essay "How Strange! The So-called Problem of the National Polity" did not go so far as to deny the possibility of forgiveness to Yuan—if he abandoned monarchism—it still remained an only partly veiled attack on Yuan's policies and character. Yuan had not absolutely signaled his intentions in August and September of 1915, and Liang evidently entertained hopes of convincing him to abandon his monarchist supporters. Only one brief passage in the whole essay can possibly be interpreted as remotely tolerating Yuan's imperial ambitions. Liang does refer to the time as not being ripe; Yuan should be pursuing the tasks of his presidency.³⁹ One might infer that some day monarchism might, therefore, be appropriate. However, to wrench a few phrases out of an essay of nearly ten thousand characters is highly misleading. Liang did not say that the time would ever be right for returning to the monarchy, and in fact the thrust of the essay is opposed to any such idea. As late as December, Liang still held some hope Yuan would not go through with the monarchy, warning him directly that he was getting bad advice out of tune with the temper of the times.⁴⁰

It is true, of course, that Liang did not consider republicanism absolutely good. But he considered no national polity absolutely good. Liang plainly stated that he wanted Yuan to remain *president* of a Chinese *republic*. Unlike the revolutionaries, who still had some popular support in the southeast, Liang's attitudes toward Yuan were mixed, and he had never pretended otherwise. The point is that if forced to choose between Yuan and the republic, Liang had clearly signaled that he would choose the republic. He was warning Yuan; he was signaling his loyalty up to a point. A century before, Liang might have kept a silken cord handy; as it was, he prepared a safe house in the foreign concession in Tianjin and in the winter secretly made his way from there to Shanghai, Hong Kong, and the movement's strongholds in the southwest to oppose Yuan actively.

Regardless of such personal factors, what Liang himself had to say must be taken seriously, whether he turned against Yuan to defend the republic or defended the republic in order to turn against Yuan. "How Strange! The So-called Problem of the National Polity" was more than propaganda. It was a declaration of personal political principles. Liang proclaimed his conservatism, not in so many words—he might have preferred to see himself as a "moderate progressive" or some such formula—but in the sense of "conservatism" as gradualism within the basic boundaries of the existing system. At the same time, Liang had a clear sense of the deficiencies of the existing system and some ideas about how to ameliorate them. Nowhere did Liang defend the status quo as a sacred object bequeathed from the ancestors or as a precious vessel shaped in subtle and manifold ways by the practical application of the national culture à la Burke. Liang's defense of the system was a defense of republicanism, and in thinking about republican institutions he began to consider the kind of society that would support republicanism.

The Rhetoric of Republicanism

Liang's argument that the nation's existing constitutional shape—its national polity—should not be tampered with was largely utilitarian.⁴¹ His rhetorical strategies were concentrated on the goal of indicating the practicality of his views. As noted above, Liang freely admitted the imperfection of the republican form of government, but he was careful to do so only while emphasizing that neither monarchism nor any other particular constitutional form offered, by itself, a solution to any nation's problems. There were, at best, degrees of suitability, he argued, but Liang's main point was that the entire question was not appropriate for abstract analysis. The practicalities of reform instead mandated constitutional conservatism. Indeed, Liang used this very point to defend himself against accusations of inconsistency: how could he favor a constitutional monarchy before 1911 but then oppose it later? Liang argued not only that the revolution had changed political circumstances but that he was precisely consistent in a moderate conservatism which deprecated any radical change.

At the same time, Liang never confronted the ambiguity inherent in the question of the “national polity.” It must be crucial if it is all-embracing and so worth struggling over. It appears to define the essential constitution of the nation. On the other hand, Liang argued that the most progressive goals can all be met within any given national polity. Real democracy, for example, could be built under either a monarchical (constitutional) or republican national polity, just as either could be autocratic in practice. If, then, the national polity does not matter much, if the real issues are decided in the realm of political forms, why should either Liang or his opponents fight over it?

One answer clear enough at the time is that they were fighting over power: the question of augmenting Yuan’s authority and the question of who would control China upon Yuan’s death. Few had much respect for Yuan’s son Keding, a leading proponent of the monarchy and heir-apparent. Liang was well aware of the power issue. But another answer has to do with the direction of progress for China. Liang hoped China could find a route toward democracy. He did not think it was ready for universal suffrage (scarce enough anywhere in 1915), but he thought limited democratic institutions could be made to work.

“How Strange! The Problem of the So-called National Polity” is a rhetorical masterpiece of argumentation, satire, and emotional appeals. It was written in a fairly classical style and weighed in at over 9,000 characters. Although Liang publicized his views with press conferences and had “How Strange!” widely published, it was clearly not meant for popular consumption. It was too long and too difficult. It was no fiery call to arms but a reasoned and personal statement of views. The latter quality was important for the essay’s success. Liang repeatedly inserted himself into the essay, reminding his readers that he had been right in the past, that he was “truly confused” by monarchist arguments, that he feared for the fate of China, that they should listen to him.

The essay had a secondary function, which explains some of what, from the point of view of propaganda, are “dysfunctional” aspects. Even granted that Liang never tried to appeal to a truly mass audience, the essay was too rambling and pacific in tone to rally even the educated minority to the anti-Yuan movement which he was simultaneously if still secretly fomenting. Aside from attacking monarchism, then, the second purpose of the essay was to offer a kind of justification for Liang’s whole political life. He was forty-two in 1915. He had a record of supporting losing—though not necessarily incorrect—causes. His one attempt to support a winning cause, Yuan Shikai, was ending in disaster and disgrace. It was a good moment to take stock; indeed, only a remarkably unreflective man could have failed to ask himself what had gone wrong so often. On the surface, then, the essay constituted a defense of the republic, while running through the argumentation are a series of emotive personal statements. Together, these two aspects of the essay give it considerably more rhetorical force than either alone could have. Liang combined them in such a way as to give flavor to what was essentially a simple argument of political theory and to keep his

personal remarks from straying into self-righteousness and sentimentality. The reader could thus more easily identify with Liang and, through identifying, find agreement. Liang also exuded the intention of playing fair with the reader, pointing out where he might seem to have biases, posing as frank and transparent. In fact, however, Liang was anything but transparent.

In spite of its rambling nature, “How Strange! The So-called Problem of the National Polity” was a masterful rhetorical balancing act. Liang treated or affected to treat Yuan with courtesy, but a threat was implied: monarchism was a mistake because Liang and people like him as well as the former revolutionaries like Huang Xing and Sun Yat-sen would oppose Yuan. Liang’s powers were not great, but he possessed some influence over public opinion as well as with several military leaders. The implicit problem he raised for Yuan was that of the pivotal middle. In 1913 he had supported Yuan against the revolutionaries, but in 1915 he threatened to join with the revolutionaries, risking even civil war, against Yuan. Explicitly, Liang claimed that if Yuan wanted a monarchy, the masses would crown him king after he had given his nation peace, order, and progress. Otherwise, a monarchy could only emerge out of a second rebellion—in which case the nation would not survive. For Liang, as he repeatedly made clear, the responsibility for civil war would lie with the monarchists. They were illegally fanning the flames of revolution. They were the destructive force. And since, in Liang’s most deeply held belief, revolutions were not progressive, he blamed the monarchists for their current fear-mongering as much as for their future plans. The republican government had already lost much of its initial authority as it underwent constant structural changes during its first four years; now, as Liang saw it, the monarchists were compounding the problem by “awakening monsters to commit crimes and simply confusing the people.”⁴²

Liang pretended not to understand the monarchist movement:

I would like to ask the theorists [monarchists] just who this future, ideal monarch will be. To put it plainly, will this person be our current president? Or if it is to be someone other than the current president, where will we find this person? (The current president is not willing to become emperor, as he has himself repeatedly and firmly stated. This is nothing more than a hypothetical discussion and I am willing to accept the blame for disrespect.) If we say that we will seek out such a person elsewhere, then where will we put the current president? Since the president has exhausted himself working for the nation for so long, if this be his plan, how can he not want to put down his heavy burdens as soon as possible and find a peaceful retirement? But let me ask if the entire Chinese people are able to allow the president to retire or if they will make him serve under a titular monarchy to organize a responsible cabinet? . . . Even if we crowned the current president as emperor (regardless that he himself has said he is not willing to accept this), even if we ordered him to sacrifice himself completely for the sake of the nation in order to fulfill the hopes of the people, do the people really want him to become a monarch without responsibility? The Europeans and American often compare this kind of king to a fat

pig gorging at the trough, wearing beautiful decorations, and so forth. In this time of great troubles for China, should we really give such an important person such an idle job? If we use the pretext that the current president may as well assume the job of a monarch without power, then whether a responsible cabinet can be established and used remains a question. I am not denying that the current president could tolerate a responsible cabinet under him, but I have not seen anyone who has the qualifications at this time to replace the leader in shouldering this burden.⁴³

Liang wanted to maintain the fiction that nothing more than an abstract, academic debate was occurring as much as did the Chouanhui. Thus did Liang almost plead with Yuan, as the only person who could control China, to stay on as president. Liang implied that Yuan was irreplaceable even as he warned Yuan that monarchism was unacceptable. Indeed, Liang quickly went on to claim that the monarchists, assuming utter chaos was avoided, were much more likely to produce an autocratic system than a constitutional monarchy. They (or Yuan) might remember: "The Qing collapsed through proclaiming constitutionalism on the outside but practicing the reality of something else on the inside. According to the *Book of Songs*, [Zhou Wen Wang told the men of Shang:] 'The mirror for Yin is close; it lies in the [failures of the] lords of Xia'" —Yuan should see that he was about to make the same mistake as the Qing.⁴⁴

When he wrote "How Strange! The So-called Problem of the National Polity" Liang still had some hopes of convincing Yuan to draw back from the monarchist movement—not because he was under any illusions at this point about Yuan's personal predilections, but precisely because he hoped that by going public (at some personal risk) he could reach an audience (newspaper readers, urban professionals, government bureaucrats) whose opinions Yuan would have to take into account.⁴⁵ Liang thus had a dual audience: Yuan and the middle-class urban populace. On the one hand, Liang did not want to provoke open rebellion against Yuan at this point, but on the other hand he did want to prepare for it.

Liang's job in opposing Yuan was not easy. He had to defend the Republic—in spite of its obvious failures. He had in effect to defend the presidency of Yuan Shikai while attacking Yuan's monarchism. Liang worked through hints rather than direct statements to defend his own record of supporting Yuan, for it was a major part of his rhetorical strategy never to admit he had been wrong. Indeed, he had to explain why he now supported the Republic, although he had spent most of his life attacking republicanism and favoring a constitutional monarchy for China; this, he did openly and in an ingenious way made it part of what we will see was a "consistency motif" in the essay. Liang also attacked Yuan, though since direct attacks would have been extremely dangerous and possibly unpublishable, he did so by hints and allegory. This also had the effect of allowing Yuan the space to back down without losing face. Liang wanted to attack Yuan's monarchism with just enough vigor to kill the monarchist movement

without losing the patient. For Liang still did not see how anyone but Yuan could keep China unified, even though at the same time his ultimate position was that a republic without Yuan, however tenuous, was preferable to a monarchy with an Emperor Yuan.

The essay is framed by an opening declaration in which Liang recounts he was ill in bed when he suddenly heard that the question of the national polity (*guoti*) was being broached. Liang thereupon felt compelled to pen his rebuttal. He stressed that he was essentially unbiased, having been, as his extensive public record showed, neither especially impressed with republicanism nor opposed to other constitutional forms. His readers would of course have known him better as a critic of republicanism, so his current defense of the republic had some of the force of a conversion. Nor did Liang—unlike some, was the point—have a personal stake in the issue in terms of finances or position.

Liang thus began with a pose of frankness and transparency, a personal statement which was designed to put the reader at ease. The essay ended on an equally personal though darker note. Here Liang treated himself as a neglected prophet. He cited Qu Yuan and other martyrs of loyalism. He announced his willingness to be disgraced, because he could not stop himself (from speaking the truth). People would eventually respect him. “However, for the last ten years I have found no way to get my countrymen to listen to me. This is my misfortune. This is the nation’s misfortune.”⁴⁶ Nonetheless, Liang proclaimed not only his political consistency but also his consistent correctness. A recurring motif in the essay was Liang’s pleas to his readers to consult his previous writings. He promised that if they looked at his 200,000 words from the debates preceding 1911, they would see that he had never advocated changing the national polity. The point of his support for constitutional monarchism had not been his love for the Qing house, which after all had insulted and humiliated him, but his knowledge of the disaster that revolution would entail. Liang spoke movingly of how, in spite of the bankruptcy of the Qing, he had felt it should still be possible to implement reforms and unify the people. Not only did Liang proclaim his consistency, he also pointed out how right he had been. “I wish Chinese of good will would look again at the essays I published in 1904 and 1905 in *New People’s Miscellany*. Of the disasters suffered by the people in the few years since 1911, which have not occurred as I predicted?”⁴⁷

Liang also used satire as a weapon, attacking monarchist arguments by ridiculing their advocates. First, he turned to Frank Goodnow, beginning by noting he was not really sure what Goodnow was trying to say. Liang then moved on to call Goodnow’s arguments trite and general, but his real target was the Chinese, and he took the opportunity once again to assert his consistent correctness.

Even now we are not allowed to rest before a proposal to change the national polity a second time arises. I have no deep knowledge about this, but judging from its appearance, it originated from a certain comment by an Amer-

ican professor, Dr. Goodnow. Whether Goodnow really advocated this and exactly what he does advocate—again, I have no deep knowledge (though in an interview with the English-language press, Goodnow denied advocating this). I am rather confused, but the important features of Goodnow's essay seem to be: an abstract comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of monarchism and republicanism; a discussion of the fitting of national polity to national conditions; and cautionary illustrations of the cases of Central and South America and of Mexico and Portugal. All these notions are quite obvious. They are neither especially deep nor too subtle. Why is it that flocks of politicians and scholars failed for years to understand such simple theoretical truths but only now suddenly pay attention to a foreigner's words? I am truly confused. If we assume that this notion could not have been discovered except by a foreign scholar, then there is nothing more to be said. Yet although my humble learning is shallow and not up to even a tiny bit of Dr. Goodnow's, still it can be said that the professor's current important writings unconsciously found the same great wisdom as my writings of ten years ago. His most penetrating insights are not worth even a tenth or hundredth of mine. This is not wild boasting: readers may consult my writings. . . . My only regret is that I don't have blue eyes and a red beard. My essays have therefore not been of interest to my countrymen.⁴⁸

Similarly, Liang repeatedly referred to proponents of monarchism as if they were former republican revolutionaries who had now changed their minds. He was fair in presenting their arguments: Liang did not erect flimsy straw men to push over. However, he was not fair in caricaturing the monarchists. Yang Du, for all his opportunism, had consistently supported constitutional monarchism. Liang claimed that the leaders of the movement to overthrow the republic “are precisely those who had established the Republic” while those who wanted to keep the republic “are on the contrary precisely those who formerly opposed the Republic.”⁴⁹ This irony assumed tragic dimensions because of the lack of character of the monarchists of the present day. They were the changeable ones because they were simply pursuing self-interest by following power holders. They were like a spouse who seeks a divorce instead of tending to the health of the marriage. First they claimed republicanism would solve all of China's problems, and then they changed their minds and said monarchism would save China from the evils of republicanism. Conversely, Liang also had fun picturing conservative monarchists as wild-eyed radicals while placing himself in the seat of moderation and, of course, reason.

There was nonetheless a note of brittleness, even bitterness to Liang's tone. His sarcastic attacks on Goodnow and Yang Du were not essential to his argument, but they made for good propaganda. The attack on Goodnow served to remind readers that the proponents of monarchism included—were inspired by—a foreigner whose knowledge of China was necessarily quite shallow. Monarchism was thus associated with foreigners rather than being rooted in Chinese tradition. Perhaps Liang designed this passage not only to release some of his

bitterness, but more particularly to win over those to whom traditionalism could appeal.

Yet in the end, Liang's rhetoric exemplified less irony and sarcasm than reasonability. The persistent, even insistent, voice of Liang himself heard throughout the essay was ostensibly the voice of reason, concern, disinterest, and, not least, sophisticated intelligence. Liang thus offered himself as a model of the "citizen"—that is, precisely the person who is both of society and of the state and who forms with like-minded persons a civil community. The contradictions in tone of the essay—reason and passion, logic and satire, pride and humility, moral commitment and scientific detachment—are the contradictions of civil society. Liang modeled the man committed to civic concerns, both independent to a degree from society, which in turn is defined partly as the world of family obligations and other interests of an inevitably partial nature, and independent to a degree from the state, which he was not afraid to challenge.

Civil Society

None of the ideas discussed above was specifically new to Liang in 1915. However, the gestalt was different. By 1915 the balance of Liang's political philosophy as well as the historical context had changed fundamentally from 1895 or 1905. Above all, the *problématique* had shifted with the Revolution. In the last decade of the Qing the concern of progressives—whether constitutionalists or revolutionaries—was with popular rights (*minquan*) and democratization.⁵⁰ Even in his most pessimistic moods, when he spoke of the need to sacrifice liberty, Liang had kept in mind that the key function of "enlightened despotism" was precisely to "enlighten" the people (*kai minzhi*) and promote democracy (*xing minquan*). By 1915 and especially 1916, the *problématique* for Liang had shifted slightly. He gave the middle ground new attention. From a dual focus on the minutiae of policymaking and government formation on the one hand and the grand theory of democracy on the other, he moved to an area of concern we can call the social, the relationship between state and society, or more precisely "civil society."

Liang saw politics as a subset of broader cultural *and* institutional changes. This is "politics" in the very broadest sense of the word, constituting an understanding of politics not as an independent sphere of activity but as one aspect of the larger civil society. Political institutions needed a firmer base but would develop only in tandem with the social sphere. The failures of the republic were leading Liang to the conclusion that no government could solve all of China's problems. Liang's earlier statism was being tempered by a new appreciation of the broader public realm. This is manifested in five requirements, none of them, properly speaking, independent of the others:

1. The "rules of the game," which should be imposed on politics but come from outside the realm of politics.

2. Freedom of speech (not absolute but substantive).
3. Civil liberties—that is, government under legal restraints.
4. The balance between law (or institutions) and men (or morality)—that is, Liang knew that neither institutions nor morality was perfectible but existed only in tension.
5. The central task of the elite—and the state—to educate the people.

In other words, Liang imagined a community dominated neither by the state nor by society, but a sphere produced by both. This was to be a sphere of rational discourse conducted by reasonably disinterested citizens.⁵¹ If a civil society is taking shape in contemporary China or if one is to take shape, it will perhaps reflect more of the concerns outlined by Liang Qichao in 1915 than it will reflect the definition of the term derived from the Western experience with capitalism and democracy.⁵² Its institutional and cultural bases may be rooted, rather, in the evolving settings of family, academia, workplace, modern media, and the links between them. Liang not only modeled himself and his writings on reasonableness, as noted above, but he also deliberately chose to withdraw from active politics.

Perhaps this decision stemmed from the death of his father over the winter—a traditional moment for temporary retirement and for taking stock. In any case, Liang announced his political retirement to a reporter in August 1916.⁵³ Yet Liang emphasized the *political* pertinence of working outside the government in a *constitutional* system. Liang considered himself well suited to the tasks of criticizing the government and giving the people a political education. He would neither separate himself from the government nor from society. Liang was in effect trying again to offer himself as a model of citizenship: disinterested yet concerned. If it is true that Liang originally had envisioned the anti-Yuan struggle as augmenting his political power and that Cai E's death made this unlikely, it remains the case that he deliberately renounced the pursuit of power.

Whether or not we agree to call Liang's model of political life a conception of "civil society," it should be recognized as a rather conservative vision, neither precisely authoritarian nor democratic in the contemporary sense of the word.⁵⁴ Earlier, I mentioned Liang's new appreciation of "the formal aspects of democracy." This implied a fear of untrammeled power without a sense that legitimacy had to stem from "of" and "by" the people. Rather, Liang was trying to figure out how a limited franchise could be made to work in a country suffering from the problems of backwardness. It was then that Yuan Shikai's growing dictatorship and above all his monarchy turned Liang's attention to the social basis of good government.

Liang repeatedly said that the ultimate task of both the government specifically and the political elite or the political classes broadly defined was to educate a backward populace. Such policies would in time produce a citizenry not only informed and empowered but, equally important for Liang, responsible and with

a capacity for disinterested action. Liang saw himself as a realist, in no sense a utopian and only an “idealist” insofar as he saw ideals as useful signposts along what could only be gradual and steady progress. He was profoundly conservative in his deep-seated distrust of radical cures and social engineering. His paternalism should also be noted. Nonetheless, Liang was also disdainful of reaction and obviously motivated by much more than the search for personal power or national strength. “Progress” for Liang seems to have connoted the cultural and moral as much as the technological and administrative: never more so than in the wake of 1911. Civil society forms the meeting ground of these various concerns.

Although the context is obviously different, Liang’s views are remarkably like a conservative strain of democratic thinking so prominent in England and the United States. This is not democracy conceived in terms of participation and direct decision making by the people but rather in terms of checks and balances, procedures, indirect representation, minority rights, property rights, and so forth. It places theoretical sovereignty in the people and rests its legitimacy on the ultimate consent of the governed, but nonetheless places the practical realm of politics at some distance from the people.

In the midst of constitutional crisis, which in a larger sense plagued not just 1915–1916 but the entire post-1911 era, Liang understandably concentrated on urging acceptance of a fundamental form of the state—the basic conditions for order. Individuals and government alike were to act within a system. The precise nature of the system was far less important than the fact of its existence. This is a sense of following a set of rules simply taken for granted in most working democratic systems, but Liang felt it had to be made explicit when the rules had not been unconsciously bred into a people over a long period of time. It follows from this that freedom of speech was not an absolute right: certain topics should be considered off limits. Liang did not explicitly call for prior restraint laws on political speech but clearly felt that responsible people would not question the constitutional basis of the state. There were wrong as well as right times for certain kinds of discussions. On the other hand, government too was under restraints. Liang seemed to hope that an institutional system of checks between supervisory organs and administrative organs could be established “to limit the practice of political power in certain ways.”⁵⁵ Unfortunately, although the defeat of Yuan was decisive in eliminating the monarchical alternative, it also led to full-fledged warlordism. Those like Liang who had said only Yuan could hold the country together were proved right.

Liang’s conservatism is, of course, also shown in his resolute gradualism and his ceaseless attacks on revolution as well as his elitism. Liang insisted that Yuan’s monarchism amounted to a revolution not just to make a rhetorical point but—with considerable justification—on the grounds that it amounted to an extralegal overthrow of the constitution. Liang understood that the monarchist movement was not only intellectually bankrupt but also had no social or cultural base. The anti-monarchists wished to preserve the status quo, which, however

flawed, at least represented a set of practices people were becoming used to. In this spirit, writing just as the monarchical movement emerged into the open, Liang criticized iconoclasts while defending Confucianism as still useful and the “old” morality as still important: new learning and reforms would have to be built on the foundation of this old morality.⁵⁶ At the same time Liang emphasized that conservatives who were blaming the radicals for creating trouble were blind to the real sources of China’s problems.⁵⁷ He denied the possibility of the “restoration of antiquity” (*fugu*). In other words, Liang had a powerful sense of the present. He knew that turning the clock back was neither desirable nor even possible and that the delicate mechanisms of a republican state were even more complicated than those of a monarchy.

Notes

The author would like to thank Chang P’eng-yuan, Joan Judge, Richard Lufrano, Andrew Nathan, Young-tsui Wong, and Ernest Young for their critical and helpful readings of earlier drafts of this essay.

1. Xiaobing Tang traces Liang’s newfound appreciation of an inclusive “democratic political culture” and of “the formal aspect of political institutions and participation” to his reactions to World War I and his 1919 trip to Europe—*Global Space and the Nationalist Discourse of Modernity: The Historical Thinking of Liang Qichao* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 188–190. However, it strikes me that his dual emphasis on legal procedure and political consciousness originated a little earlier. Portions of the above paragraphs are adapted from my “Citizenship and Human Rights in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Thought: Liu Shipei and Liang Qichao,” in Wm. Theodore de Bary and Tu Wei-ming, eds., *Confucianism and Human Rights*, copyright © 1997 by Columbia University Press. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

2. Of course, I simplify drastically. Liang’s career to 1911, when he possessed unparalleled influence in introducing Western ideas, has received considerable attention. See inter alia the aforementioned Xiaobing Tang, *Global Space*; and also: Hao Chang, *Liang Qichao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890–1907* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971); Dong Fangkui, *Liang Qichao yu lixian zhengzhi* (Liang Qichao and constitutional politics) (Wuhan: Huazhong shifan daxue chubanshe, 1991); Philip C. Huang, *Liang Qichao and Modern Chinese Liberalism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972); Zhang Pengyuan (Chang P’eng-yuan), *Liang Qichao yu Qingji geming* (Liang Qichao and revolution during the Qing), (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1964), and *Lixianpai yu Xinhai geming* (The constitutionalists and the 1911 Revolution) (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1969). A focus on Liang’s later career, when he was an important but no longer virtually unique intellectual force may help illuminate not only the nature of the early Chinese Republic but also something of his earlier thought. For a discussion of Yuan Shikai’s monarchical movement, including Liang’s opposition, see Ernest P. Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k’ai: Liberalism and Dictatorship in Early Republican China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977), pp. 210–240.

3. Zhang Pengyuan, *Liang Qichao yu Min’guo zhengzhi* (Liang Qichao and the politics of the Republic) (Taipei: Shihuo chubanshe, 1981), pp. 9–20. See also Philip Huang, *Liang Qichao and Modern Chinese Liberalism*, for Liang’s post-1911 career (pp. 112–165). As the Qing fell in 1911, Liang followed Kang Youwei in calling for a “titular monarchy” but soon gave up the idea.

4. "Xianfa zhi san da jingshen" (The three great essences of Constitutionalism), *Yinbingshi wenji* (Collected works from the Ice-Drinker's Studio) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, n.d.), juan 29, p. 100. See Zhang Pengyuan, *Liang Qichao yu Min'guo zhengzhi*, p. 11.

5. "Xianfa zhi san da jingshen," *Yinbingshi wenji*, juan 29, pp. 92–109.

6. "Related to" but hardly derived from, in any direct sense. To reduce Liang's beliefs about political and social questions to his political ambitions is fatuous; in no small part, the career avenues he took were determined by his beliefs. Did Liang support Yuan between 1912 and 1915 because he favored a strong government or did he favor strong government because he wanted to get power through Yuan? The question is obviously unanswerable and probably meaningless.

7. See the symposium " 'Public Sphere'/'Civil Society' in China?" in *Modern China* 19.2 (April 1993). Other conference volumes are forthcoming. See also Mary Backus Rankin, "The Origins of a Chinese Public Sphere: Local Elites and Community Affairs in the Late Imperial Period," *Études Chinoises* 9.2 (automne 1990), pp. 13–60; and David Strand, " 'Civil Society' and 'Public Sphere' in Modern China: A Perspective on Popular Movements in Beijing, 1919–1989," Working papers in Asian/Pacific Studies, Duke University, 1990. The issue is also discussed in Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 147–175. It may well seem that the notion of civil society has reached the limits of its usefulness to the China field—at the least; however, the point here is not whether such a thing was coming into existence but that it provides a useful analytical approach to understanding Liang Qichao's thought.

8. As Mary Backus Rankin suggests, with some reservations, was the case, "Some Observations on a Chinese Public Sphere," *Modern China* 19.2 (April 1993), pp. 177–178.

9. David Strand has attempted to outline connections between the rise of independent civic activity from the late nineteenth century to the public sphere of the Republic and even elements of civil society in post-Maoist China in his "Protest in Beijing: Civil Society and Public Sphere in China," *Problems of Communism* 39.3 (1990), pp. 1–19.

10. "Gonghe yu junzhi" (Republic and monarchy), reprinted in *Huguo yundong* (The national salvation movement), ed. by the Second Historical Archives and the Yunnan Provincial Archives (Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1988), pp. 62–68. Goodnow's motives in writing this article as well as his knowledge of the political context are not clear. Goodnow said later that he meant his comments to be purely academic in nature.

11. "Junxian jiuguo lun," reprinted in *Yang Du ji* (Collected writings of Yang Du), (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1986), pp. 567–584.

12. Liang learned the distinction between national polity and political institutions from Japanese legal scholars and political theorists. *Kokutai* (*guoti*) in Japanese referred specifically to the continuation of the monarchy in the Meiji period (1868–1912) and beyond; as is well known, it assumed almost mystic proportions and was especially useful to Japanese conservatives in the twentieth century, though it did not inherently preclude democratization. Liang's devotion to national polity was of an entirely different, non-mystical order. Liang's use of "national polity" here was immediately derived from the Chouanhui's own insistence that it was not a political organization but a study group interested in research on the "national polity." The distinction between *guoti* and *zhengti* was initially less than clear to the press. *Shengjing shibao* used the term "gonghe zhengti" for "republican national form" (26 August 1915). *Shenbao* criticized the Chouanhui for questioning what it called the "zhengti" (12 August 1915).

13. "Yizai suowei guoti wenti zhe" (How strange! the problem of the so-called national polity), *Yinbingshi wenji* (Taipei: Taiwan Zhonghua shuju, 1960—this edition hereafter cited as "YBSWJ") 55.20b.

14. "Wunian lai zhi jiaoxun" (The lessons of the last five years), *Dun bi ji* (Taibei: Taiwan Zhonghua shuju, 1961), p. 217.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 218.

16. "Shang zongtong shu" (Letter to the president), *Yinbinshi wenji*, 34.4.

17. "Wunian lai zhi jiaoxun," *Dun bi ji*, pp. 218–219.

18. See Andrew J. Nathan, *Chinese Democracy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), pp. 49–63, for a discussion which emphasizes that Liang's instrumentalist views of individualism and pluralism were actually based on statism and harmony.

19. "Yizai suowei guoti wenti zhe," *YBSWJ* 55.22b.

20. *Ibid.*, 55.24b–25a.

21. "Zhongguo liguo zhi da fangzhen," *YBSWJ*, juan 28.

22. "Yizai suowei guoti wenti zhe," *YBSWJ*, 55:23a.

23. "Wunian lai zhi jiaoxun" (The lessons of the last five years), *Dun bi ji*, p. 216.

24. "Fugu sichao pingyi" (A critique of the concept of "restoring antiquity"), *Da Zhonghua zazhi* 1.7 (20 July 1915).

25. "Fandui fubi dian" (Telegram in opposition to the restoration), *Yinbinshi wenji*, juan 35, p. 16. For a more thorough discussion of Liang's views on the law (also mentioning his efforts to balance people and institutions), see Liang Siming and Song Ren, "Qiantan Liang Qichao de zhengzhi yu falü sixiang," *Liang Qichao yanjiu* 5 (October 1988), pp. 7–12 and "Liang Qichao zhengzhi falü sixiang de lilun yuanyuan chutan," *Liang Qichao yanjiu* 7 (November 1990), pp. 16–20.

26. "Yizai suowei guoti wenti zhe," *YBSWJ* 55.20a.

27. 6 January 1916, in Wu Tianren, *Cai Songpo jiangjun nianpu* (Chronological biography of General Cai E) (Taibei: Guoli bianyiguan, 1989), pp. 180–185.

28. "Guoti zhanzheng gongli tan" (My personal participation in the war over the national polity), *Yinbinshi wenji*, juan 56, p. 209.

29. "Huguo zhi yi huigu tan" (Recollections on the national salvation movement), *Yinbinshi wenji*, juan 39, p. 89.

30. This version is in "Guoti zhanzheng gongli tan," *Yinbinshi wenji*, juan 56, p. 209; the bribe was only 100,000 yuan according to "Huguo zhi yi huigu tan," *Yinbinshi wenji*, juan 39, p. 90.

31. "Huguo zhi yi huigutan," *Yinbinshi wenji*, juan 39, p. 89.

32. "Songpo tushuguan ji" (Notes on the Cai Songpo library), *Yinbinshi wenji*, juan 40, p. 29. In another version, Liang has it that they swore together, "If successful, we will not take any official positions but return to our studies. If we fail, we will die, and no matter what, we will not flee to a foreign concession or abroad," in "Huguo zhi yi huigutan," juan 39, p. 91.

33. Zhang Pengyuan, *Liang Qichao yu Min'guo zhengzhi*, p. 83.

34. "Shang zongtong shu," *Yinbinshi wenji*, juan 34, pp. 2–4.

35. Zhang Pengyuan, *Liang Qichao yu Min'guo zhengzhi*, pp. 79–80.

36. Cf. Andrew J. Nathan: "Constitutionalism served the interests of these groups [the new political elite of bureaucrats, professionals, and politicians] because it offered each a legitimate political role without opening the political arena to the groups below them. (It was secondary whether the constitution should be monarchical or republican; the bureaucrats' lukewarm preference for the former bowed before the politicians' insistent campaign for the latter.)" See *Peking Politics, 1918–1923: Factionalism and the Failure of Constitutionalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 18–19.

37. Zhang Pengyuan, *Liang Qichao yu Min'guo zhengzhi*, pp. 64–69.

38. See Meng Xiangcai, *Liang Qichao zhuan* (Biography of Liang Qichao), (Taibei: Fengyun shidai chuban gongsi, 1990), pp. 268–273; and Zou Mingde, "Liang Qichao yu Yunnan tao-Yuan huguo qiyi" (Liang Qichao and the national salvation uprising against

Yuan in Yunnan), in Pan Hai'ou, ed., *Huguo wenji* (Collected essays on the national salvation movement) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1988), pp. 97–99. Zou acknowledges that “objectively” Liang’s writings were effective anti-Yuan propaganda.

39. YBSWJ, 55.23b-24a.
40. “Shang zongtong shu,” *Yinbingshi wenji*, juan 34, pp. 2–4. Ding Wenjiang and Zhao Fengtian, in *Liang Qichao nianpu changbian chugao* (Long draft chronological biography of Liang Qichao) (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1983), p. 714, date the letter to April, but Zhang Pengyuan more authoritatively dates it to mid-December 1915, in *Liang Qichao yu Min’guo zhengzhi*, p. 85, n. 23.
41. I use “utilitarian” in the sense of instrumentalist. Liang’s goal remained a strong and wealthy China, and his earlier support for the Qing had been utilitarian with precisely the same end in mind.
42. “Yizai suowei guoti wenti zhe,” YBSWJ, 55.24a.
43. Ibid., 19a-19b.
44. Ibid., 20a.
45. The exact printing history of “Yizai suowei guoti wenti zhe” is unclear. It was published in Liang’s *Da Zhonghua zazhi* (Great China journal) 1.8 (dated 20 August 1915 but probably printed a little later) and widely reprinted. Liang also made the same points in interviews with the press. The essay was serialized in *Shenbao* (Shanghai) starting September 6.
46. “Yizai suowei guoti wenti zhe,” YBSWJ, 55.26a.
47. Ibid., 17a.
48. Ibid., 17b.
49. Ibid., 18b.
50. For a recent study of constitutionalists in China, see Joan Judge, *Print and Politics: “Shibao” and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China, 1904–1911* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).
51. Portions of the preceding paragraph were adapted from my “Citizenship and Human Rights in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Thought: Liu Shipei and Liang Qichao,” in Wm. Theodore de Bary and Tu Wei-ming, eds., *Confucianism and Human Rights*, copyright © 1997 by Columbia University Press. Reprinted with permission of the publisher. For a definition of civil society as a community partaking of both state and society, see Heath B. Chamberlain, “The Search for Civil Society in China,” *Modern China* 19.2 (April 1993), p. 207.
52. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1989). According to Habermas, the classical (Greco-Roman) distinction between the private and the public was virtually equated with the household and the state. Though the distinction continued to be honored in theory, it collapsed in fact with the gradations of authority inherent in feudalism, whose court culture (and nature of authority) demanded the public representation of private court or manorial life. This in turn disintegrated with the coming of capitalism, which reimposed the public-private distinction and for the first time also distinguished between (public) society and (public) authority. Hitherto private questions, particularly of an economic nature, became subject to state (mercantilist) concerns, but the emerging bourgeoisie refused to let the state (absolutist bureaucracies) autonomously define the realm of the public. Habermas distinguishes between civil society in a narrow sense of commodity relations, which he classifies as belonging to the private sphere, and the “public sphere” (or “society,” as the term is often used in opposition to the state). If current concern with civil society has stemmed from the events of the last decade in Eastern Europe, Habermas’s view of the bourgeois public sphere has dominated theorizing about civil society in early-modern Western Europe. Nonetheless, even though China

lacked a strong bourgeoisie, “civil society” provides a useful rubric for much of what Liang was considering in the mid-1910s partly on the basis of his knowledge of the West and Japan.

53. Ding Wenjiang, ed., *Liang Qichao nianpu changbian*, p. 795.

54. Debates over “civil society” in the China field have suffered from a misconception that the term implies democracy or a democratic teleology.

55. “Yizai suowei guoti wenti zhe,” YBSWJ, 55:18b.

56. “Fugu sichao pingyi,” *Da Zhonghua zazhi* 1.7 (20 July 1915).

57. Liang accused the conservatives of hypocrisy; he blamed *them* for 70–80 percent of China’s problems and blamed the radicals for just 20–30 percent—*ibid.*

Evolving Prescriptions for Social Life in the Late Qing and Early Republic: From *Qunxue* to Society

Wang Fan-shen

The Western invasion of China in the late Qing precipitated changes at the very core of Chinese politics. As resisting the foreign intrusion became imperative, the role of the government was no longer limited to managing the affairs of the country and looking after its own subjects. Rather, it became one of encouraging all members of the country to fully develop their individual strength and then to unify this strength to increase national power. It is within this context that a number of late Qing intellectuals began to reflect on whether the political participation of the broad masses would weaken or strengthen the nation.

The received wisdom on this issue was that “the people can be made to follow but not to understand,” that it was politically expedient for “the people to be dammed up like a river,” and that empowering the common people would automatically weaken the authority of the central government. Moved by the foreign intrusion to challenge these principles, however, late Qing intellectuals became convinced that national power depended on the efforts of the entire nation. They believed that the most important source of national strength was not the government—most certainly not a handful of people holding power in the central bureaucracy or the military—but the entire body of the people; all citizens (*guomin*, *gongmin*) had to develop their own abilities. These intellectuals thus thought carefully about how to mobilize popular energies, develop popular education, and physically train “the people.”

In their efforts to unify all members of the nation, however, the late Qing intellectuals were faced with several problems. First, it was difficult to liberate

individuals from the control of their respective clans and encourage them to serve the nation. Outside of the clan, moreover, the people had formed no other independent organizations and existed like “a sheet of loose sand.” Second, the intellectuals realized that because the Chinese government was incapable of effectively controlling the population below the county level, it was very hard to not only regulate but to mobilize the people. Finally, the intellectuals understood that, although the government was incapable of regulating society, it was still capable of suppressing any spontaneous, popular organizations. As a result, the common people had been unable to develop any formal organizations capable of supervising the government or pursuing their own well-being. In response to these problems, and in order to allow the people to autonomously develop their potential strength and enhance national power, the intellectuals sought three things: to liberate the people from clan restrictions and enlighten them; to create a government that was both well organized and truly able to rule; and to create a “society” that would transform the people from a “sheet of loose sand” to an organized, empowered “organism.”

The intellectuals hoped for changes from both the top down and from the bottom up; not only the organization of the government but the quality of the people would have to change. This intellectual trend gave rise to ideas of “the science of group strength” (*qunxue*) and “society” (*shehui*), and ultimately to the advocacy of total social transformation through social revolution.¹ This essay will outline the evolution of this intellectual trend from the late Qing through the New Culture Movement.

Grouping and Society

The two terms *grouping* (*qun*) and *society* were introduced to China by Yan Fu.² However, while Yan spoke more often of grouping, the term *society* became popular with later intellectuals mostly through the influence of Japanese thinkers. Because these two terms appeared almost simultaneously, the difference between them is difficult to discern. While some considered their meanings as identical, others emphasized their differences and defined society as “a group with laws” (*youfa zhi qun*).³ We will analyze the relationship between the two concepts.

“Grouping” and “society” both refer to a kind of organization that produces collective strength, but they do not mean collectivism. Chinese intellectuals considered both as alternatives to the old horizontal organization of family relations. In attempting to forge these new social bonds, however, they closely studied the traditional mode of relations between individuals and between groups and individuals. Although they repeatedly referred to these traditional relations in negative terms as “chains” (*gousuo*) that bound people, they nonetheless promoted new ethical norms such as “public morality” (*gongde*) as a means of binding all elements of society together.⁴

In China, “grouping” and “society” were both influenced by the British Social

Darwinist Herbert Spencer's theory of the social organism. While this theory emphasized the strength of every member of society, it also stressed the relationship between individual members. This relationship was represented by the metaphor of crystals chemically bonded together and contrasted to the image of loose potatoes in a sack. Spencer's discussion of the social organism's spontaneous organizational strength had a more marked influence on the concept of society in China than it did on the concept of grouping.

The idea of grouping flourished in China after 1895. In a nation of undisciplined and disorganized people, it presented a means of overcoming the tyranny of family organizations and uniting individuals in pursuit of higher social goals. It also provided a method of forming voluntary, spontaneous, social mass associations which could serve a number of social objectives, from disseminating enlightenment thought, to initiating a national salvation movement, and ultimately to establishing a modern nation. In the mid- to late-1890s, grouping took many different forms including scholarly groups (study societies [*xuehui*]), commercial groups (companies [*gongsi*]), and national groups (assemblies [*yiyuan*]). After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95, intellectuals promoted "scholarly groups" with the most enthusiasm. Kang Youwei wrote: "In order to develop both social customs and general knowledge, it is absolutely necessary to unite the greater human community," and in order to unite the human community, it was necessary to open study societies. In 1897 Liang Qichao declared that "owing to the growing power of study societies over the last two years, the Chinese have suddenly become more developed in their customs."⁵ These study societies took various forms and focused either on politics, academics, reforming customs, or promoting new cultural practices. In the late 1890s Chinese study societies, large and small, numbered more than one thousand, an indication of their increasing strength.

The intellectuals' emphasis on social organizations reflects a new stage in China's response to its deepening political problems in the late Qing. This response was manifest in a series of transitions from an emphasis on studying "Western technology," to studying "Western politics," and from studying "Western politics" to exploring Western thought, culture, and society. When the intellectuals finally focused on the social level, they worked from a most basic point of departure: the horizontal organizations of the most rudimentary level of commoner society. At the same time, they gradually conceived of society as a separate entity: Social and political problems were not the same, and state and society could be opposed to one another. Some even considered society and nation to be adverse terms.

The two concepts of "grouping" and "society," which were central to this new focus on the social, dominated in consecutive periods. Whereas "grouping" was most commonly used from 1895 to 1900, "society" gained currency only after the Boxer Uprising and continued to be popular up through the May Fourth period. Thereafter the notion of society gradually converged with the idea of social revolution.

Late Qing *Qun* (Grouping)

The Chinese conception of *qun* cannot be separated from Darwin's theory of evolution. While the distinctive feature of Darwin's theory was its radical challenging of previously held views, in China Darwinism was specifically appropriated as a means of encouraging collectivism.⁶ In his paraphrastic translation of Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* (Tianyan lun), Yan Fu incessantly used the term *grouping*, emphasizing that it was the group and not the individual that advanced natural selection and survival of the fittest. Yan wrote that if the entire national group was disadvantaged in a competition, then the individuals in the group would also be harmed, and it was therefore necessary to mobilize all the nation's potential strength for the struggle. He understood collectivism as the best method of concentrating strength.⁷

The concept of grouping was also related to the theory of the social organism. This theory, the source of which can be traced far back in the history of the West, was not systematically developed until the late nineteenth century in China. Among the various representations of social organic thought in this period, it was the writings of Herbert Spencer which had the greatest impact in China. Using the theory of biological evolution to explain social phenomena, Spencer considered society and the nation to be the same as living organisms which constantly evolved from simpler to more complicated forms. He believed that society had three large organ systems: those organs responsible for the production of goods corresponded to the system of nourishment; commerce, banks, and transportation that were responsible for distribution within society corresponded to the organism's system of circulation; and managing institutions and the government were the equivalent of the nervous system. Because every element was a small-scale society or organism, and because all elements were mutually dependent, the entire society relied on these separate elements and on the quality of each cell.⁸

Yan Fu broadly used the theory of survival in "Yuan qiang" (On strength) and in his translation *Qunxue yiyan* (On liberty). His writings were replete with references to the "unit" (*yaoni*) and the "total" (*tuodu*), and with crystal-mineral and cell-plant metaphors. Reflecting the influence of Yan's translations, these concepts and metaphors appeared repeatedly in later theories concerning the establishment of Chinese society.⁹ This language was further linked to theories advocating politics from the bottom up, such as the theory of local self-government. When the magazine *Jiangsu* was first published by overseas students in Tokyo in 1903, for example, it advocated that township regulations should serve as the foundation of grouping, and it linked these ideas to Jiangsu's local self-government movement. This is one of the many forms of social commentary to appear after the concept of grouping was combined with the theory of the social organism.

The science of group strength and the theory of the social organism empha-

sized that not only every element, cell, or crystal within the organism should freely develop its own strength but that all social elements should bind tightly together. In order to achieve this end, mutual understanding had to exist among all elements. For example, the assembly should connect the sentiments of those above and those below; merchant associations should link the concerns of merchants; and study societies should communicate the feelings and thoughts of scholars.

After Yan Fu, it was Liang Qichao who most forcefully promoted the idea of grouping in conjunction with his ideas on popular power (*minquan*). Liang related both concepts to ideas of enlightenment and national salvation. He viewed popular power as a means of national salvation, stating that “the increasing reverence for imperial power and the increasing disdain for popular power are the source of China’s weakness.” He made the same connection between grouping and national salvation. Because the West had used group strength to impose itself on China, it was necessary for the Chinese to respond with group strength in order to effectively resist and defend itself. He wrote: “If one individual is confronted by another, the first still has a chance of surviving. If one individual is confronted by a group, however, his destruction could be foreseen. In the last hundred years, this has been the advantage of the West’s collective skill” versus Chinese individual skill.¹⁰ This competence in acting as a group was essential to the formation of groups, Liang continued. “If collective skill is used to regulate the group, then the group will succeed; if individual skill is used to regulate the group, the group will fail.”

Liang considered public morality to be one of the most important principles of Western collective competence. “Private morality means that people independently perfect themselves,” he wrote. “Public morality means that people mutually work to perfect their group.” It was not only important not to want to harm the group, but necessary to actively want to benefit the group. “Those who are committed to an ideology of self-control and self-discipline believe that although they do not benefit the group, neither do they harm the group. Is not consciously not benefiting the same as doing harm? How can it be that the group benefits the individual but the individual does not benefit the group? That is the same as neglecting to pay my debt to the group.”¹¹ In appealing to collective skill as the means of regulating the group, Liang drew an important dividing line between public and private morality, and between individual and communal ethics. The overriding theme of his essay “Renovation of the People” (*Xinmin shuo*) was the regulation of the group. The prime objective of the essay was to transform the nation into a group and to form a modern nation that could compete internationally. Liang thus reassessed Chinese ethics, values, outlook on life, and political philosophy from the perspective of the group.

Liang Qichao believed that, in the past, the individual rather than the group had been the point of departure of Chinese ethics, values, and politics. In a short time, however, there had been a shift from the individual to the group, and what

many people had naturally regarded as the highest value suddenly became unendurably backward. In a short passage in the essay "On Public Morality" (Lun gongde), Liang demonstrated that traditional morality was completely incompatible with group ethics:

Although Chinese ethics had developed early, it emphasized private morality and almost completely lacked a sense of public morality. If we look to our people's moral source, which includes such works as the *Analects* and the *Mencius*, we find that 90 percent of these teachings are concerned with private morality whereas only 10 percent are concerned with public morality. Examples of discussions that do not go beyond private morality include [chief judicial officer for the sage-king Shun] Gao Tao's discussion of nine virtues; the three virtues of the Hong Fan [The Great Model, a chapter in the Documents Classic]; the discussion in the *Analects* of "gentleness, uprightness, courteousness, temperateness, and yielding," of "denying the self and repeating the rituals," of "faithful integrity and sincere respect," of "few occasions for blame and few occasions for regrets," of "resoluteness and honesty," and of "knowing the decrees of Heaven and understanding whatever words one hears"; the *Great Learning*'s discussion of "knowing the point where to rest and of being watchful of oneself when alone" and of "refraining from cheating and not being satisfied with oneself"; the *Doctrine of the Mean*'s preference for "studying rigorously and practicing a sense of shame," "being afraid and watchful," and "cultivating the shoots of virtue with thoroughness"; and Mencius's discussion of "preserving the heart and nourishing one's nature" and of "self-examination and strong reciprocity." In terms of cultivating the qualities of the private individual, these texts are sufficient. But if only the qualities of the private individual are developed, could this enhance the moral quality of all of humanity? Certainly it could not.¹²

Liang emphasized that it was necessary to shift from stressing the good of the individual to the common good. In the same passage he further noted:

Today we can try to compare old Chinese ethics to new Western ethics. The categories of the old ethics are sovereign and official, father and son, elder and younger brother, husband and wife, and friends. The categories of the new ethics are family, society, and nation. The old ethics emphasize matters involving individuals vis-à-vis other individuals. The new ethics emphasize matters involving individuals vis-à-vis the group. Clearly, ethics are relevant to a consideration of how individuals perceive themselves and how they treat others. However, this is only one aspect of ethics, not ethics in its entirety. The entirety of ethics unites public and private and benefits all.¹³

Late Qing intellectuals believed that the "science of group strength" served to develop the same collective interests as public morality by moving people to think broadly of problems from the point of view of organizations and commonality. Therefore, from this period on, the science of the group was designated as a compulsory course subject in new-style schools. Intellectuals also reflected on various methods of disseminating the idea of grouping, as Liang Qichao had in

his 1902 essays, “The Relationship between Novels and the Regulation of the Group” (Lun xiaoshuo yu qunzhi de guanxi) and “The Relationship between Buddhism and the Regulation of the Group” (Lun Fojiao yu qunzhi de guanxi). In addition, Liang had contemplated writing a book, *On Grouping* (Shuoqun), which would have been composed of 10 sections and 120 essays. In the end he wrote only the preface.

Liang Qichao’s thinking on this subject was extremely influential. As early as 1902, when Huang Zunxian first read Liang’s “Renovation of the People,” he enthusiastically praised the section entitled “To Unite the Group” (Hequn) among other sections. Huang thought that “from the time of Yao and Shun until today, the people of our nation have all had only one idea: to submit to their rulers. They did not know that they had rights in relation to the government, and they certainly did not know that they had obligations toward the human community. If a people with absolutely no understanding of politics was to be granted political power and allowed to participate in government, they would not only refuse these rights and privileges, but would also produce heretical theories and indulge in slander.”¹⁴ Huang realized that to reform the “ignorant people” who lacked self-governing ability and who had no conception of social rights or obligations, it would be necessary to use “the way of uniting the group.” This way involved a process that would start with independence from traditional restraints, continue with self-rule and the implementation of self-government, and ultimately lead to group rule through the cultivation of the communal nature of organizations. The objective of this process was to improve the people so that they would “possess public morality, collective strength, and virtuous ways.”¹⁵ These ideas are similar to those expressed in Zhang Binglin’s “Explaining Individuality” (Ming du) and other essays.¹⁶ From Huang’s point of view, public morality and collective strength interacted as both cause and effect; the group could only have strength once public morality had bound individual members to one another.

At this time those who studied the science of grouping could be divided into two camps: One believed that old organizations could be used as the foundation of grouping, whereas the other considered it necessary to destroy all old organizations and create new ones. When Liang Qichao, Zhang Binglin, and others promoted the group, to a greater or lesser extent, all of them thought it was necessary to destroy traditional family-based organizations. At the same time, Huang Zunxian and Liu Shipei expressed different aspirations and interests. Huang advocated choosing the good qualities from China’s traditional clan organizations and secret societies and using them as the foundation for uniting the group. He argued that clan organizations had good qualities: “When I reflect on the different means of grouping people together in China, only clan organizations are somewhat developed,” he wrote.¹⁷ However, he also understood that members of traditional clans had a “small circle” mentality and easily formed cliques and argued among themselves. Therefore, he noted, “because of the ways

clan organizations operate, it is not possible to use them today." Secret societies, however, could be a basis for establishing the group: "Only secret societies have the power to unite the group, to get all to echo one another, and to achieve results by employing only a small part of their strength." Because their "self-image is based on the principle of equality, their ideology is to equally benefit all and save each other from distress." Huang advocated uniting clan organizations and secret societies:

I think that in striving to unite the collective, we should employ the clan organizations' sentiment of binding together and the secret societies' emphasis on friendship and mutual aid. Then we could adopt the Western science of the group and universal ethical principles, together with the benefits of economic science and the self-governance of the body politic. This would advance group rule and the regulation of the people, invigorate the popular spirit, and ultimately forward the discussion of popular power.¹⁸

Even though Liu Shipei did not make a special contribution to the theory of the science of the group, he was similar to Huang Zunxian in that he advocated using factions or cliques as the foundation for new groups, and using ancient social organizations to make the science of the group seem reasonable. In 1905 (or 1906) he wrote:

Factions give rise to associations and communities. Once a faction exists, it can be used to develop other groups. This is why the ancients allowed cliques to exist. Also, in ancient times, the people had to establish organizations and those who belonged to the same organization would join together in what was a form of local self-government. There is no evidence of people being prohibited from gathering together. . . . Today it is not widely known that when the Buddha preached there were always hundreds of thousands of people listening to him. In the Western nations, all matters result in the establishment of associations and all people form factions. This is because while a single tree is easy to break, even Wu Huo would have difficulty breaking a pile of wood and exhibiting his strength.¹⁹ If the people form factions, then they can help and protect one another. Every nation arose out of factions. If we want China to flourish, we should not avoid speaking of cliques.²⁰

Liu's argument was part of a long historical debate on cliques in China. While in "On cliques" (Pengdang lun), Ouyang Xiu had written that cliques have true value, the Yongzheng emperor specifically issued an edict opposing them, and the traditional literati generally attacked them. Liu Shipei's position in this debate was to advocate the beneficial use of cliques as a means of promoting grouping in China comparable to the practice in the West. Three or four years after writing these words, Liu Shipei became highly enthusiastic about anarchism for a short period of time (1907–8), and advocated replacing governmental organizations with numerous spontaneous local organizations including all kinds of

secret societies and merchant organizations.²¹ It is clear that from beginning to end Liu Shipei was greatly concerned with using spontaneous social organizations to form the group.

Because “grouping” was based on the formation of associations and commonality, it emphasized voluntary popular organizations. This kind of horizontal organizational strength would disrupt the power of the central dictatorial government, something which alarmed a number of conservative literati. Wang Xianqian of Hunan wrote: “The great distress of all under heaven is grouping.”²² Similarly Wenti, the conservative Manchu official who was vehemently opposed to Kang Youwei’s efforts to organize society, considered that there was no difference between the various late Qing organizations and bandit associations. All such organizations, he believed, defied the Qing’s 1652 prohibition against the formation of associations. “Grouping” in any form, conservatives such as Wenti believed, represented a potential force that could threaten the absolute authority of the central government.

Society

The modern Chinese term *society* (*shehui*) has a long history. It appears in Huang Zunxian’s *Riben guozhi* (Treatises on Japan) of 1887, and in Yan Fu’s translation *Qunxue yiyian* (1903) where Yan defines society as “a grouping with laws.” However, it is clear that until 1902, although many people were familiar with the meaning of *grouping*, they had no knowledge of *society*. The “Questions and Answers” (Wenda) column in *New People’s Miscellany* (*Xinmin congbao*), no. 11, provides an example of popular confusion concerning the two terms. The editor of the journal responded in the following way to a reader who had presumably expressed his difficulties with the usage of the concepts grouping and society:

Shehui [J. *shakai*] (society) is the term the Japanese use to translate the English word *society*, which some Chinese translate as grouping. In this instance “society” means the human group. . . . This newspaper uses the words grouping (*qun*) and *shehui* quite arbitrarily, making it impossible to impose a uniform usage and thus confusing eyes and ears. . . . However, there is no doubt that the term *shehui* will one day also be commonly used in China.²³

Three years later, in 1905, when the column “Explanation of New Terms” (*Xin shi ming*) explicated the meaning of *shehui*, the concept became clearer. The editor understood that the one character for grouping could not convey the complete meaning of “society,” and he used three entire pages of text to define *shehui*. His comments included the following:

Society is an organism. . . . Society is part of an organism. In all entities that are organisms the entire entity and every part of it work in concert, helping one another and making it possible for the entity to grow. . . . All

organisms must have the ability to reproduce, to grow, and to metabolize. Society provides all of these functions. . . . Societies have consciousness. . . . People are the elements of society. The unification and harmonization of the consciousness of the mass of people thus forms the consciousness of the society.²⁴

These excerpts reveal how some people had already begun to understand that society was a more profound entity than human grouping at this time. Many began to emphasize the need to undertake basic social organizational work, and they also started to realize that China was a nation without a society. The essay entitled "Guochi pian" (Essay on national shame) written by a certain Ke Xuan and selected as the lead essay in the tenth issue of *Dongfang zazhi* (Eastern miscellany) in 1904, stated that China "lacked a society" and that "society preserves the interests of the collective. An entity that has public welfare constitutes a society, whereas one that lacks public welfare does not constitute a society."²⁵

The Boxer Movement served as a further impetus in the development of the concept of society. It gave the literati of the time a sense of the importance of establishing a society and it forced them to realize more fully that the late Qing theory of the social organism had real meaning. Considering the ignorance of the Boxers, the literati understood that unless every element in society was sound, there would be no salvation for the nation. It was for this reason that the theory of the social organism became one of the theoretical bases for the lower-class enlightenment movement which reached its zenith at this time.²⁶ To rebuild the nation, the intellectuals believed, it was necessary first to renovate its constituent members—the people of the nation. At the same time, when people spoke of *qun* in this period, their attention shifted from those above to those below, from the literati to mass organizations. However, they still did not separate politics and society into two distinct categories of thought.

Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao opened a discussion on the theory of "creating society" (*zao shehui*). Most of their writings on this subject appeared after 1902. Kang Youwei merged the tradition of self-government in his native county with his knowledge of Western politics and his experience traveling to a number of European nations in a 1902 essay entitled "Gongmin zizhi pian" (Citizen self-government). In this long essay he ardently promoted the need to create a citizenry (*zao gongmin*).²⁷

For Kang, "the people can be called citizens when they have the right to discuss politics and the responsibility to love their country." Once there were true citizens, national affairs would no longer completely depend on one or two people in the government, but instead they would rely on the whole citizenry. "In the past, nations used the skill of one sovereign, one prime minister, or one general in their struggles; today they use the talent and the knowledge of all of the nation's citizens." Clearly, Kang's key motivation in "creating the citizenry" was to strengthen the nation: "Through the establishment of the citizenry in Europe, America, and Japan the people began to regard the nation as their own.

They openly discussed what would harm or benefit the nation, and they debated national affairs. . . . As a result they became patriotic.” He further noted: “All nations have citizens. Only our nation does not have citizens.” Therefore, even if the skill of China’s one sovereign or one prime minister or one military officer was sufficient to oppose another nation, the strength of China’s entire national citizenry was far from that of other countries. This was precisely why modern China could not resist the Westerners.

Kang repeatedly brought up the self-governing power of grass-roots organizations in foreign nations. He argued that all rural villages in the West had political systems which modern China would be incapable of establishing, even if it deployed the strength of the entire nation. In the West, “the politics in one township are so exhaustive in detail and so meticulous that they almost resemble the politics of a small nation.” He then asked, “How is it that other nations are like this? It is because they all obey those the people themselves elect and are ruled accordingly.” This is unlike China, where “the officials rule for the people and do not accept the people ruling themselves.”²⁸

Kang Youwei believed that a civic nation was the most objective guarantee of good and honest government. He argued that there was no guarantee that a benevolent sovereign would implement benevolent policies. We do not know when a benevolent ruler will be born, he claimed, and even if every age did produce a sage who would implement benevolent government, this would still be inferior to a civic political system.²⁹ Although the Chinese people always expected that honest and benevolent officials would rule the people in local areas, Kang claimed that such officials were rare in Chinese history. Under the Western system of civic government, however, where the objectivity of the system was guaranteed, honest and benevolent officials were everywhere to be found.³⁰

Kang also looked back to the tradition of village self-government in the Chinese interior, repeatedly referring to the “Nanhai tongren ju” (Nanhai Compatriots Office) as an example. This “tongren ju” deserves to be carefully studied. According to Kang’s description, this office administered thirty-six villages comprising approximately 50,000 men and women. The two directorships were filled by metropolitan graduates (*jinshi*), provincial graduates (*turen*), and first-degree graduates (*zhusheng*). If the villagers brought litigation, the issues were decided by the director. The office employed twenty people who were controlled by a kind of police officer, and there was one clerk and one commanding officer. Kang Youwei argued that these kinds of organizations existed everywhere in Guangdong: The “Jiujiang tongren ju,” for example, represented more than 300,000 men and women, and some areas brought together several thousand people. There were many other similar organizations.³¹ Although Kang believed that these organizations proved that China already had civic self-government, he emphasized that the “Nanhai tongren ju” was not a true civic political system. Because “the system was not nationally established, and because the deputies and directors were not elected by the people, at times there were problems of

long-powerful families and influential gentry occupying key positions and arbitrarily making decisions. Furthermore, the common people were repressed and had no means of correcting this injustice.³² If the nation had a civic system, these ills could be eliminated.

Liang Qichao's "Xinmin shuo" and Kang Youwei's "Gongmin zizhi pian" were both written in 1902, but there are no obviously derivative traces of Kang's thinking in Liang's essay. Yet because the master Kang and his disciple Liang were both from Guangdong, and because both of their native villages had established practices of village self-government, they both expounded on the need to have village life as the foundation of a civic system. At the same time, both Kang and Liang merged these ideas with Western theory. Liang lamented that when China was engaged in "work that concerned the entire society the people were not involved." As a result, for many years "China could not organize an appropriate, organic, completely ordered, reasonable, and developed government."³³ "Organic" as it is used here is a short form of "social organism." When Liang promoted the establishment of such a social organism, he first advocated the destruction of old organizations and their renewal through the creation of an "artificial structure" ("this system would be completely developed by man").³⁴ Moreover, he wanted to start from the grass-roots level of self-government because he considered this the only way to succeed. "A single province, prefecture, department, county, township, market town, company, school—all have the complete form of a nation. . . . The nation is nothing more than an enlarged copy of a province, a prefecture, a department, a county, a township, a market town, a company, or a school. Therefore if small entities are able to govern themselves, then large entities should conduct themselves in the same way."³⁵ Liang Qichao wrote at length about the Accumulating Rope Hall (Diesheng tang), the Jiangnan Association (Jiangnan hui), and the Elder Persons Association (Qilao hui) of his native village, and about other village self-government organizations.³⁶

After the success of the 1911 Revolution, intellectual leaders began to make a distinction between "politics" and "society" and debated which should be emphasized in consolidating the republic. Although initially most intellectuals optimistically believed that political construction would lead to a better society, they were soon to find that societal organization was most fundamental.

By the time of the May Fourth Movement of 1919, many people, having witnessed the actions of the corrupt and reactionary early republican governments, had become deeply disillusioned with the 1911 Revolution. Because they had lost all hope for politics, many decided that it would be best to focus all of their attention on culture and society. This change was most obvious in the case of Liang Qichao, who emphasized the importance of establishing society more forcefully after the Revolution of 1911 than he had during the period of "Xinmin shuo."³⁷ In 1915 Liang narrated his own story: "From my twenty years of experience, I deeply feel that society is the foundation of politics." He exclaimed, "Since all the nations' intelligent and gifted literati are gathering in political

circles, no one is heeding social questions.”³⁸ At this time intellectuals put forward two ideas: first, to reject politics; second, and one that arose more gradually, to exert all their strength to reform society.³⁹

There was, however, one important difference between the May Fourth generation and the earlier generation of intellectuals who advocated the science of grouping. The former agreed that originally there had been a number of popular Chinese social organizations, but they were obviously not satisfied with them. They were not satisfied, for example, with the orphanages, widow relief societies, flag and staff halls (a kind of charitable hall used by clans to encourage chaste women), and other institutions organized by clans or village gentry. They were even dissatisfied with industrial and commercial guilds, associations, and offices. They knew that these various organizations existed, yet they resolutely declared that China had no society—which meant that they did not consider traditional social organizations to be up to their standard of “society.” There are two reasons for this. First, these traditional organizations neither transcended kinship ties nor were they impersonal. Second, they were nothing but loosely arranged organizations formed on an ad hoc basis and lacking any crystallizing strength. Another reason these May Fourth thinkers did not discuss traditional village self-government further was because they did not feel at all attached to China’s traditional thought and society, and they did not consider that village self-government represented a true ideal. As a result, they boldly spoke of “creating society” and clearly expressed their rejection of and refusal to discuss politics. When they advocated creating society, they differed from Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and others who merely separated politics from society. When the younger generation spoke of creating society, they not only separated society from politics but considered them to be opposites. They further emphasized that the task of creating society should fall to the young people. The one who spoke most directly and clearly about China’s lack of society and about the need to create a society was the May Fourth student leader Fu Sinian.

Fu Sinian and “Creating a Society”

Three months before the May Fourth incident, Fu Sinian wrote a short essay entitled “Shehui-qunzhong” (Society-mob) in the February 1, 1919 edition of the journal *Xinchao* (New Tide). This essay anticipated the overall development of his thought. Fu argued that,

generally very few societies in China are real societies, for most are nothing more than mobs. All societies true to the name—efficient societies, organic societies—must have a precise organization and a firm, healthy, active force. . . . A Chinese person’s achievements cannot generally be compared with a Westerner’s. There are several reasons for this: One is that the society that Westerners depend on is strong and healthy, meaning that there is an opportu-

nity for every individual's abilities to develop, whereas the society that the Chinese depend on is nothing but a mob, a society in name but not in substance. As a result, in China there is no way for the ability of each individual to develop.⁴⁰

This appeal to China's mob to crystallize and become an organic unit in order to develop its strength reflected late Qing thinking on the issue of the social organism. Fu noted further:

First, take political society as an example: an official agency in China is nothing but a rabble or a band of bandits. It does nothing but follow precedents. How can mere documents lead to anything? Does such an agency have any organization at all? No, it is simply inorganic! As for other institutions and associations organized by officials, they do nothing but engage in destructive, unproductive, and unethical matters. We might as well just call them mobs. It is the same for industrial and commercial organizations. Although they are slightly better than political groups, for the most part guilds formed by individuals in the same profession are inept. As for the recently formed industrial and merchant associations, compared with similar organizations in the West, they are extremely weak in terms of their capacities. This is still society in name, but mob in reality. As for the common people in the villages, they are even more dispersed, even less socially united. When you look at China's peasants who have absolutely no self-governing ability, then it becomes clear that they only live the life of a mob.⁴¹

We can see that Fu regarded all of the Chinese "organizations" at every level of society at that time as inorganic entities which lacked any mutual ties or close bonds. He even viewed the most active student organizations of the time in the same way: "As for the students' lifestyle, it is also like that of a mob, not a society. And as for the higher-level schools in Beijing, how many voluntary student organizations are there? How many spirited lives are there?"⁴² Fu frequently contrasted mob and society; the former was a sack of potatoes, the latter was an organism. Organic-style organizations were spontaneous and voluntary, and would observe a number of commonly approved rules and regulations designed to ensure the smooth functioning of the organization rather than the comfort of the individual. As for mobs, they did nothing but gather people together. "In brief," Fu noted, "Chinese people have mobs but no society. What is more, they like mob life, and they do not like the life of society. They feel the life of the mob is enjoyable whereas the life of society is not enjoyable."⁴³ Fu wanted people to distinguish between the social order (*shehui shang zhi zhixu*) and order within society (*shehui nei zhi zhixu*). Whereas the former could be achieved by any autocratic political system, the latter could be maintained only if rules and regulations were formed from within society:

"Social order" and "order within society" are very different. The former means the pacification of the surface of society, and the latter means a system

of social organization. Although the two terms differ only in the use of one grammatical particle, we cannot confuse these two kinds of order. When Yuan Shikai held the reins of government, everyone everywhere was dull and despondent. All still said, however, that Yuan could maintain social order. This superficial order, however, is only of secondary importance and cannot be compared to the more relevant internal social order.⁴⁴

The above was written by Fu not long before the May Fourth incident. Several months later, Fu left for England to study. After seeing the reality of Western society, he wrote an essay entitled “Qingnian de liangjian shiye” (The two tasks of youth), which he sent from London. Though published in the newspaper *Chenbao* on July 3, 1920, the essay was actually written one day after May 4, 1920. Fu noted: “Society is created by individuals. Every person’s innermost being is thus a small society. Therefore, the first step in reforming society is to reform oneself.”⁴⁵ After the young people reformed themselves, they had to take on the responsibility for “creating society *ex nihilo*.”

May I ask if in today’s society the task we demand of our youth is as weighty as that required by “the troubled early Republic?” No, I’m afraid it should be innumerable times heavier. However, one may ask, what is the difference between the amount of effort exerted by today’s youth versus the youth of earlier times? The task today is more serious, and so the effort exerted to achieve it will also be more intense. What was the task of the earlier period? To get rid of the Manchu barbarians. What is the task today? To create society *ex nihilo*. One does not have to reflect too hard to judge the relative difficulty of these two tasks.⁴⁶

Fu explained the meaning of “creating society *ex nihilo*” as follows:

At first glance, it seems to be a strange expression. I must explain it. One could ask whether China even has a society. If China had a society, this society certainly would not keep silent, submit to the government’s bullying, and wait for the students to cry out. If China had a society, it certainly would not lack public opinion to supervise the government. If China had a society, it certainly would not be such a confused mess. China only has individuals and crowds of people; it has no society. Because it lacks an organized society, everyone has felt up to now that no matter what the issue, there is no way of dealing with it.⁴⁷

Fu demonstrated here that society and government were opposing terms. Because China had no organized society, there was no way to supervise and confront the government or deal with complex issues. Fu analyzed the reason society was not organized:

But how is it that China ultimately has no society today? Can it be that the Chinese people lack all organizational ability? There is a historical reason for

this as well. In the past, the autocratic dynasty was the center of Chinese political organization, and the civil service examination system was the center of the organization of culture. All of society was controlled by these two systems. Under these two systems, organizational strength could only develop to a certain degree. Because autocracy could not coexist with social power, it had to forcefully destroy social power in order to maintain its own existence. On the level of thought, the examination system ensured that the people would not demand organizational power. This created today's state of fragmentation [literally, a sheet of loose sand].⁴⁸

Although Fu's idea that autocracy and social power could not coexist echoed the thinking of late Qing intellectuals, he was the first to state that it was the civil service examination system which impeded the formation of society.

In the continuation of his essay of July 3, printed in the supplement to *Chenbao* on July 5, Fu's first sentence read: "On behalf of China, the first task of youth is to create an organized society *ex nihilo*." To create something *ex nihilo*, it is necessary to create among individuals something approximating the adhesiveness between particles of crystal:

Creating an "organized society" means, on the one hand, cultivating social responsibility and, on the other hand, cultivating "adhesiveness between individuals." It is cultivating good will toward the masses, knowledge, experience, and responsibility. In brief, it is to first make new unities out of disparate elements, to experiment with social ethics within these new unities, and to use these social ethics to unite the dispersed Chinese republic.⁴⁹

This theory—of progressing from the unification of a number of separate small organizations, to the formulation of ethics and regulations for these organizations, and finally to uniting the republic—is essentially the theory of the social organism as it developed from the time of Yan Fu.

The Fate of Society under Mao Zedong

At this point, let us proceed to a discussion of Mao Zedong's view of society in the post-May Fourth period. It is clear that Mao was influenced by Liang Qichao's "Renovation of the People," as well as by Fu Sinian's theory that China lacked a true society.

Liang Qichao, in his essay "Renovation of the People," advocated destroying Chinese cultural cosmopolitanism, establishing the concept of nationalism, and regarding China as one nation among the nations of the world. Nationalism led to the concept of autonomous, independent competition among nations, and the concept of competition led to the idea of the citizen as the basis of the modern state. Moreover, Liang believed that the traditional family was impeding this process. Writing in 1920 in the *Xiang River Commentary* (Xiangjiang pinglun), Mao also criticized the fact that for thousands of years China only emphasized

the family, not the nation, the individual, not the collective. He argued that China was not a national organization, but a family organization. In the essay “Fandui tongyi” (Against unity), he wrote: “This 4,000-year-old civilized, ancient nation is simply not a nation at all. It is nothing but an empty structure.” When Mao spoke of society, he also reiterated the harshest elements of essays Fu Sinian had written not long before. “As for the people, they are dispersed, a sheet of loose sand,” noted Mao. “This is a pitiful description, though true. How is it that the Chinese people who have existed for more than 4,000 years still do not know how to handle things? They have absolutely no organization. There is not one organized society or one organized area to be seen anywhere.”⁵⁰

In 1920 Mao Zedong was enthusiastic about Hunan’s local self-government movement and seems to have felt that in order to free a province from the nominally united chaos, it was necessary to develop the power of local self-government. This was to be one step in the people’s efforts to break away from central autocratic power. At the same time, Mao realized that because government power was weak, it was necessary to depend on society and on lower-level organizations.

Up until now it has been clearly understood that unification cannot improve China’s situation. China is not thoroughly lacking in people enthusiastic about national affairs, nor are those who are enthusiastic about national affairs completely lacking in knowledge and ability. However, what makes the situation difficult to improve in China is that China completely lacks both a foundation and grass-roots organizations. If one tries to build a multistoreyed structure on a sandbar, the building will topple over before the work is completed. China’s 24 dynasties can be regarded as 24 buildings constructed on sandbars; every one of them collapsed because it lacked a foundation. Four thousand years of Chinese history is nothing but an empty structure. However much management there has been by politicians, and however much theorizing by scholars, these are just brushes on the surface of this empty structure. Each dynasty ensured several decades or several centuries of peace by dint of one prerequisite: killing a lot of people and spilling a lot of blood. When the population decreased, killing would stop and there would be peace. This had nothing to do with relying on a true foundation.⁵¹

Mao thus followed Fu in claiming that China was entirely deficient in grass-roots organizations. Mao concluded that the existence of the empty name of “China” impeded the real nation from forming. The unity of China was a disadvantage; therefore “the only method of salvation is to liberate China, to oppose unity. . . . I want to establish a true China for the future. In order to achieve this end it is necessary to destroy today’s false China.”⁵²

In this period Mao also resembled Fu Sinian in that he made reference to the theory of the social organism which had been popular from the late Qing. He wrote: “For a large organism to exist it is necessary to first have small cells. For an organization to exist it is necessary to first have every constitutive element.”⁵³

In this context, small cells meant the self-government of every province. Once the small cells were put in good order, when they united, they would form an organism. He claimed, “I feel that, in the end, China’s government today is the same as in the late Qing. The people of the nation do not want it to improve. They want it to enter an increasingly wretched state. I do not consider the situation to have reached its lowest point. While we cannot use our own force to worsen the situation, neither must we lessen the decrepitude on the government’s behalf.”⁵⁴ He also used the theory of organicism as the basis for his advocacy of Hunanese self-government. “For twenty years the men of Hunan have advocated not discussing politics. I now advocate twenty years of not discussing central politics, of having the people of every province use all their might to think about their own province. Adopting provincial ‘Monroeism,’ every province should close its doors and totally disregard whatever takes place outside its own doors.”⁵⁵ Therefore, he argued, even the National Day of October 10 should not be celebrated. After these essays, however, we do not see Mao Zedong emphasizing “organized society” or “organized local areas” again.

Conclusion

The issue of “society”—a concept discovered and developed by intellectuals—emerged for the first time in the late Qing and remained important through the May Fourth period. Although the May Fourth activists’ emphasis on creating society did not represent a complete break with the 1911 era intellectuals’ commitment to molding a nation of citizens, they did become increasingly focused on the idea of societal construction. Initially polymorphous and vague, the May Fourthers’ understanding of society and societal construction gradually became identified with social revolution in general, and with the Bolshevik Revolution in particular. Fu Sinian, for example, wrote an essay entitled “Social Revolution—Russian-Style Revolution” (Shehui geming—Eguoshi de geming), in which he linked the ideal of creating society with the Russian Revolution.⁵⁶ At the same time, the ideal of creating an organized society also became closely related to the small-scale social groups and the New Village Movement that were popular in many parts of China in the 1920s.

These social concerns were gradually eclipsed themselves, however, as the tumultuous first decades of the twentieth century unfolded. Faced with profound national crisis, May Fourth intellectuals became increasingly fixated on the need to transform China into an efficient mechanism of popular mobilization. This sense of a unified national purpose became paramount in the 1920s and particularly in the 1930s and 1940s, when various social forms were abolished in order to allow for the establishment of a unified national will. It was Mao Zedong who ultimately turned most forcefully against a disparate social body in order to build a unified China. Finally, under his tutelage, the prerogatives of the state overwhelmed the concerns of society.

Notes

Translated by Joan Judge. Notes are the author's except where noted.

1. Translator's note: Although *qunxue* is often translated as sociology, I follow James Pusey here in translating it as "the science of group strength" which more accurately reflects the meaning of the term in its late Qing context (see James Reeves Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1983), p. 64).

2. Liang Qichao's contribution to disseminating the science of group strength was the greatest. For Hao Chang's brilliant discussion of this problem, see his *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 95–100, 105–6ff.

3. On the similarities between the terms *qun* and *society*, see Wang Rongbao, "Yi qun" (Translating the term *qun*), *Xin erya* (A new progress toward correctness), quoted in Chen Xulu, "Wuxu shiqi weixinpai de shehui guan, qunxue" (The reformist conception of society at the time of the 1898 reforms, the Science of Grouping), in Gong Shuduo, ed., *Jindai Zhongguo yu jindai wenhua* (Modern China and modern culture) (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1988), p. 390. Yan Fu defined society as "a group with laws"; see Yan Fu, trans., *Qunxue yiyan* (On liberty) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, n.p.); "Yiyu zhuiyu" (Some remarks on the translation), p. 2.

4. *Xinmin shuo* (Renovation of the people) (Taibei: Zhonghua shuju, 1978), p. 15. See Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, pp. 151–52.

5. The former quotation is from Kang Youwei, *Kang Nanhai zibian nianpu* (Kang Nanhai's chronological autobiography), in *Wuxu bianfa* (The 1898 reforms), vol. 4 (Shanghai: Shenzhou guoguang hui, 1955), p. 133. The latter quotation is from Liang Qichao, in *Wuxu zhengbian ji* (A record of the 1898 political reform), *Wuxu bianfa*, vol. 4, p. 10.

6. See Benjamin Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964); and Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*.

7. This conception of the group rather than the individual as the unit of action had already had a decisive effect on Japanese thought. Darwin's thought was introduced to Japan about twenty years before China, notably by Katō Hiroyuki, who would later become the president of Tokyo Imperial University. Because Katō emphasized that the national collective was the unit for natural selection, he greatly encouraged collectivism and became a pioneer of militarism.

8. See Zhang Ruide, "Yan Fu dui Sibinse shehui youjilun de jieshao he dianjie" (Yan Fu's introduction and explanation of Spencer's theory of the social organism), *Dalu zazhi* 57, no. 4: 34–36.

9. For example, Liang Qichao's "Xinmin shuo," p. 152. However, the theory of the social organism supported gradual rather than sudden change. Therefore, in late Qing and early Republican politics, it was often used as grounds for conservatism. Because Yan Fu advocated organic theory, and because the organism can only change gradually and cannot easily change suddenly, it appealed to conservatives such as Yuan Shikai. See Ji Wenfu, "Tan Yan jidao" (With regard to Yan Fu), *Ji Wenfu wenji* (Collected essays of Ji Wenfu), (Henan renmin chubanshe, 1990), vol. 2, pp. 66–67.

10. "Shuoqun xu" (Preface to discussion of grouping), in *Yinbing shi quanji* (Complete collection from the ice drinker's studio), vol. 2 (Taibei: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), p. 4.

11. *Xinmin shuo*, pp. 12–13.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

13. *Ibid.*

14. "Huang Zunxian zhi Liang Qichao shu" (Letter from Huang Zunxian to Liang Qichao), #34, reprinted in Zheng Hailin, *Huang Zunxian yu jindai Zhongguo* (Huang Zunxian and modern China), (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1988), p. 432.
15. *Ibid.*
16. See Wang Fansen, *Zhang Taiyan de sixiang* (Zhang Taiyan's thought) (Taibei: Shibao chuban gongsi, 1985), pp. 243–49.
17. "Huang Zunxian zhi Liang Qichao shu," #34, p. 433.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 434.
19. Translator's note: Wu Huo, mentioned in the *Mencius*, was a man noted for his strength. See James Legge, ed., trans., *The Works of Mencius* (New York: Dover, 1970), p. 425.
20. Liu Shipei, *Zhongguo minyue jingyi* (The essential meaning of Chinese doctrines of social contract), *Liu Shenxu xiansheng yishu* (The collected writings of Liu Shipei), (Taibei: Jinghua, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 49.
21. See Wang Fansen, "Liu Shipei yu Qingmo de wuzhengfuzhui yundong" (Liu Shipei and the late Qing Anarchist Movement), *Dalu zazhi* 90:6 (1995), pp. 1–9.
22. Wang Xianqian, "Qunlun" (On grouping), *Kuiyuan sizhong* (Four works of the sunflower garden) (Changsha: Qiuju shushe, 1986), p. 12.
23. *Xinmin congbao* 11 (June 1902), p. 2
24. *Ibid.*, 2 (1905), pp. 1–3.
25. *Dongfang zazhi* 10 (1904), p. 225.
26. Li Xiaotu, *Qingmo de xiaceng shehui qimeng yundong* (Lower class enlightenment in the late Qing period: 1901–1911) (Taibei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindai shi yanjiusuo, 1992), p. 12.
27. Editor's note: See the article by Ma Xiaoquan, "Citizenship Consciousness and the Political Participation of the New Gentry-Merchants in the Late Qing," in this volume.
28. Kang Youwei, "Gongmin zizhi pian" (Citizen self-government), in Zhang Nan and Wang Renzhi, eds., *Xinhai geming qian shiniannian shilun xuanji* (Collection of topical essays from the ten years before the 1911 Revolution) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1977), vol. 1, p. 180.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 182
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
34. "Xinmin shuo," pp. 61, 131.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
36. Liang Qichao, *Zhongguo wenhua shi* (History of Chinese culture) (Taibei: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), pp. 12–13.
37. Editor's note: See the article by Peter Zarrow, "Liang Qichao and the Notion of Civil Society in Republican China," in this volume.
38. The above can also be seen in his "Wu jinhou suoyi baoguo zhe" (How I am going to devote myself to the national cause from now on), in *Yinbing shi quanji*, vol. 12, pp. 53, 54.
39. Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp. 51, 57.
40. "Shehui-qunzhong" (Society-mob), in *Fu Sinian quanji* (Collected works of Fu Sinian), (Taibei: Lianjing, 1980), p. 1578.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 1578–79.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 1579.
43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 1579–1580.
45. *Chenbao* (Morning news), July 3, 1920, p. 7.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Chenbao*, July 5, 1920, p. 5.
50. “*Fandui tongyi*” (Against unity), *Shishi xinbao* (October 10, 1920), in *Mao Zedong zaoqi wen'gao* (Mao Zedong's early manuscripts) (Changsha: Hunan chubanshe, 1990), p. 530.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 532–533.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 533.
56. This essay is not included in *Fu Sinian quanji*. It was first published in *Xinchao* 1:1 (1919), pp. 128–129.

Afterword

The People, a Citizenry, Modern China

Joshua A. Fogel

“The people” was not a new ontological or epistemological category among Chinese intellectuals at the end of the nineteenth century. “The people” had been part of classical Chinese discourse since antiquity, when conceptions of kingship were forged within the Confucian school with the idea that the people formed the basis of the ruler’s legitimacy. Why then have we focused such attention on this issue for the three decades from 1890 to 1920?

Whereas “the people” as a discursive trope has had a long history in China, the real, living members of that group have been accepted as subjective actors only from the period under analysis in this volume, and even then in muted, controlled fashion. One of the lessons Chinese intellectuals from the late nineteenth century learned from the experiences of the modern West, Meiji Japan, and the perceived failures of their own predecessors was that some significant portion of the population had to be brought into the political process. There were many reasons different intellectuals saw this as a necessity, from the need to buttress opposition to the dynasty to the need to stand up to the West, to the need later for China to produce something resembling a coherent fabric of society without which, many believed, China itself might cease to exist. This issue remains unresolved with Chinese even today.

From the close of the last century, a “citizenry” became perceived as one of China’s greatest needs. China had plenty of people, but they were completely outside the political process. A meaningful portion of its better elements had to be incorporated into a new structure of government and politics or China might cease to exist. Not only did many Chinese intellectuals feel the threat from the

West and Japan and the need for a strong country, but they feared the converse as well. If the people were not brought into the political process in a relatively orderly way, their complete alienation from it might lead them to the opposite extreme in desperation—revolution, and that, too, was to be avoided.

The meaning of citizenship for late Qing and early Republican intellectuals forms the prism through which we have approached their perceptions of the common people. We have argued that this hitherto little-studied topic is a critical aspect of understanding China's emergence into the world arena, and the three decades upon which we center our attention thus become even more important in appreciating the evolution of modern Chinese intellectual and cultural history. None of the figures discussed was to become a member of the revolutionary camp, although ideas emerging from their discourses did in several cases prove redolent to revolutionaries of the next generation who were just coming of age in this one. The personages from the 1890–1910 era analyzed in the essays in this book did not become figures in the 1911 Revolution, nor did those from the 1910–1920 period become Communists. The subject of explicitly revolutionary conceptions of citizenship needs further research. It may be that revolutionaries adopted some of the ideas initially explored by more moderate intellectuals and political leaders; it may also be that revolutionary mass mobilization was inimical to ideas of citizenship even while some of those ideas influenced the revolutionary conception of state-society relations. The people continued to be invoked—indeed, mainland China now even has local-level elections—but the Communist Party retains a stranglehold over political power at every significant level. Perhaps this will change in the post-Deng era.

Where does our research leave us historiographically? Where might scholars interested in the themes laid out in this volume proceed for further fruitful research? As can readily be seen, the scholarship behind a number of these essays began during the brief period when the concept of “civil society” was being widely entertained by China scholars. While that debate has tailed off (for now), discussion of civil society in the abstract has led to a productive merging with a concern for citizenship in China. From citizenship a number of new areas may emerge and old ones may need reconsideration.

Our older notion of the importance of nationalism from the late nineteenth century may need to be reexamined. What does it mean to be a part of the Chinese “nation”? The issue of ethnicity, so important in many other contemporary arenas of scholarship, has long been an issue in this era of Chinese history. In short, how will our understanding of modern Chinese nationalism be affected by the intermediacy of the issue of citizenship? This volume makes a first step in answering this question by focusing on the nexus of intellectuals, the populace, and the state.

While we are reinvestigating the major questions of identity and nation around the fulcrum of citizenship, might it not be time to think about bringing class back in? Of course, this would not be a call for a mechanical Marxist

application of "class," though it would in some measure be informed by that older discourse. What segment of the population did Chinese intellectuals mean to be included within their ideas of "citizenry"? Did different groups have a different sense of the parameters of China's "citizenry"? How did this become a sociological marker? With the United States as a prime example of a society with an active, involved citizenry, it is always useful to recall that the U.S. Constitution before amended counted blacks as only 60 percent human and, needless to say, did not offer them any civil rights; and women were not given the vote until the twentieth century. Long before universal suffrage became the law—if not the reality—of the land in the United States, de Tocqueville was struck by the way in which Americans joined clubs, associations, and other civic and private organizations. China was not facing this problem alone, but how was this disjunction between universal ideals and pragmatic measures reconciled by Chinese political activists and thinkers? When Chinese intellectuals formed ideas of a Chinese citizenry, the group that would form the core of the new Chinese nation, which classes of men (women?) did they have in mind? To what extent were these conceptions based on experience or simple theorizing?

As implied above, categories from the field of cultural studies may be of some utility in addressing the issues raised in the essays in this volume. Of course, these categories have to be refined for local purposes and not blindly imported. Even more exciting for future research, though, is the possibility that the areas and approaches of these essays—overlapping in themes with cultural studies as they are—may help inform the undertheorized arena of citizenship itself. It would be a welcome first indeed if raw material from the Chinese case were to enter the mainstream of cultural studies and enrich the larger theoretical concerns of scholars interested in citizenship, if not necessarily in China.



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— Glossary of Chinese Characters

Ajia kara kangaeru

アジアから考える

<i>Baihu tongyi</i>	白虎通義
<i>baishi luanmin</i>	裨士亂民
<i>Bai yi</i>	白衣
<i>bakumatsu</i>	幕末
<i>baoguo</i>	保國
<i>Baoguohui</i>	保國會
<i>Baoguohui zhangcheng</i>	保國會章程
<i>baoweiju</i>	保衛局
<i>baoyu</i>	保育
“ <i>Beiyou fangxue ji</i> ”	北遊訪學記
<i>ben</i>	本
<i>bianfa</i>	變法
<i>bing</i>	兵
<i>biwo wang pingdeng chu</i>	彼我亡平等出
<i>biyao</i>	必要
<i>Bi Yongnian</i>	畢永年
<i>Bo Kongjiao yi</i>	駁孔教義
<i>bu xiang tuanjie</i>	不相團結
<i>Cai Hesen</i>	蔡和森
<i>Cen Chunxuan</i>	岑春煊
<i>Changsha</i>	長沙
<i>Chenbao</i>	晨報
<i>Chen Baozhen</i>	陳寶箴
<i>Chen Duxiu</i>	陳獨秀
<i>cheng</i>	城

Cheng Hao	程顥
Cheng Yi	程頤
“Cheng zhen xiang difang zizhi zhangcheng”	城鎮鄉地方自治章程
Chen Huipu	陳惠普
Chen Jijian	陳基建
Chen Leng	陳冷
Chen She	陳涉
Chen Tianhua	陳天華
chichi zhi mang	蚩蚩之氓
chongjue wangluo	衝訣網羅
Chou'anhui	籌安會
Chuansha	川沙
Chunqiu	春秋
Chunqiu fanlu	春秋繁露
Chunqiu wei yan Kong tu	春秋緯演孔圖
Cixi	慈禧
Dadao hui	大刀會
dagong wuwo	大公無我
daibiao	代表
Dai Jitao	戴季陶
dang	黨
Danyang	丹陽
dao	道
<i>Da Qing huidian</i>	大清會典
daquan zhengzhi zhi guo	大權政治之國
daqun	大群
datong	大同
<i>Daxue</i>	大學
Deng Xiaoping	鄧小平
di	地
dibao	邸報
Di Baoxian	狄葆賢
Diesheng tang	疊繩堂
difang gongshi gai bu ganshe	地方公事概不干涉
difang zizhi	地方自治
<i>Diguo ribao</i>	帝國日報
dong	動

<i>Dongfang zazhi</i>	東方雜誌
<i>Dongnan hubao yuekuan</i>	東南互保約款
du	獨
Duanfang	端方
duli	獨立
<i>Eluosi yanjiuhui</i>	俄羅斯研究會
fa	法
Fan Zhui	樊錐
fatuan	法團
fei jie jihua	非階級化
feitu	匪徒
feng	風
Feng Guifen	馮桂芬
fengjian	封建
fengjian lun	封建論
fenzhi	分治
fugu	復古
fuqiang	富強
Fu Sinian	傅斯年
gaizao	改造
gedang	革黨
Gelao hui	哥老會
gemingpai	革命派
geming zhi dang	革命之黨
gong	公
gongde	公德
Gongdu huzhutuan	工讀互助團
gonghe	共和
Gonghedang	共和黨
gonghui	公會
gongju	公局
gongli	公理
gonglun	公論
gongmin	公民
gongmin zizhi	公民自治

“Gongmin zizhi lun”	公民自治論
“Gongmin zizhi pian”	公民自治篇
gongshe	公社
gongsi	公司
gongyi	公益
gongyi (craftsmen and workers)	工役
gousuo	鉤鎖
guafen	瓜分
Guangfuhui	光復會
Guangxu	光緒
Guanqian	觀前
“Guanian dajie shimin gongshe yuanqi”	觀前大街市民公社緣起
guanzhi	官治
gumi	組
guo	國
“Guochi pian”	國恥篇
guofa	國法
Guofeng bao	國風報
guohui	國會
guojia	國家
guojia sixiang	國家思想
guomin	國民
guomin li	國民力
guomin shehui	國民社會
guominxing	國民性
guoquan	國權
guoshi	國事
guoti	國體
guoyi	國益
Gu shi bian	古史辨
guwen	古文
Gu Yanwu	顧炎武
hanjian	漢奸
“Haijiao fujun jiazhuan”	海嶠府君家傳
Hanxue	漢學
Han Yu	韓愈

haoshi zhi tu	好事之徒
hequn ("Hequn")	合群
heshang	和尚
Hong Xiuquan	洪秀全
<i>Huangdi hun</i>	黃帝魂
Huang Shizhong	黃世忠
<i>Huangshu</i>	黃書
Huang Zao	黃藻
Huang Zhangjian	黃彰健
Huang Zongxi	黃宗羲
Huang Zunxian	黃遵憲
Huaxia zhi guo	華夏之國
hua-yi	華夷
Hu Hanmin	胡漢民
hui	會
Hui (emperor)	惠
Hui (journalist)	灰
huiguan	會館
 jia	家
jian'ai	兼愛
Jiang Jieshi	蔣介石
Jiangnan hui	江南會
<i>Jiangsu</i>	江蘇
jian shu	堅樹
jiaohua	教化
jiaoyang	教養
jiaozhu	教主
Jiaqing	嘉慶
jie	界
jiedang yingsi	結黨營私
jieji	階級
jieji yu daode xueshuo	階級與道德學說
jieji zhanzheng	階級戰爭
jieji zhidulun	階級制度論
"Ji guanshen jiyi baoweiju shi"	記官紳集議保衛局事
"Ji Hongshan xongshi"	集洪山形勢
Jinbudang	進步黨

jingcong	景從
jingshi	經世
<i>Jin gu wen bianyi</i>	今古文辨義
jingxue	經學
jingzuo	靜坐
jinhua	進化
jinshi	進士
jinwen	今文
Ji Ran	計然
“Jiujiang tongren ju”	九江同人局
jiu shehui	舊社會
jiushi	救世
ju	局
jue buneng yu na shehui xiangrong	決不能與那社會相容
jun	君
“Jun huo”	君禍
jun min gongzhi	君民共治
jun min gongzhu	君民共主
junquan	君權
junxian	郡縣
“Junxian lun”	郡縣論
junzhu	君主
junzi	君子
juren	舉人
kai minzhi	開民智
Kangxi	康熙
Kang Youwei	康有爲
kaozhengxue	考證學
Ke Xuan	可軒
Kishimoto Mio	岸本美緒
Kobayashi Ushisaburō	小林丑三郎
Kongjiao hui	孔教會
<i>Kongzi gaizhi kao</i>	孔子改制考
Laiyang	萊陽
li (precedent)	例
lianghu	糧戶

liangmin	良民
Liang Qichao	梁啟超
liangzhi	良知
lianjie tuanti	聯結團體
lieguo jingzheng	列國競爭
Lifanyuan	理藩院
Li Hongzhang	李鴻章
lihua zhuanxiu ke	理化專修科
Li Jieqi	李戒欺
Li Liangfu	黎亮夫
limin	利民
lishu	隸書
liu jing jie shi	六經皆史
Liu Kunyi	劉坤一
liumin	流民
Liu Shipei	劉師培
Liu Xin	劉歆
lixianpai	立憲派
lixue	理學
liyue	禮樂
Li Yuerui	李岳瑞
luanmin	亂民
Lu Jiuyuan	陸九淵
“Lun Fojiao yu qunzhi de guanxi”	論佛教與群治的關係
“Lun gongde”	論公德
“Lun Hunan yingbian zhi shi”	論湖南應辦之事
lunli	倫理
“Lun xiaoshuo yu qunzhi de guanxi”	論小說與群治的關係
“Lun xuezhe budang jiao ren”	論學者不當驕人
“Lun jinshi guomin jingzheng zhi dashi ji Zhongguo qiantu”	論近世國民競爭之大勢及中國前途
Lü'ou qinggong jianxuehui	旅歐勤工儉學會

Mai Menghua	麥夢華
Makesi zhuyi yanjiuhui	馬克思主義研究會
Mao Zedong	毛澤東
maozei	蟲賊

min	民
<i>Minbao</i>	民報
minben	民本
minde	民德
ming	名
mingdu	明獨
minguo	民國
<i>Mingyi daifang lu</i>	明夷待方錄
minhui	民會
minli	民力
<i>Minli bao</i>	民立報
minqi	民氣
minqing	民情
minquan	民權
minsheng	民生
minxin	民心
minxin zhi bujing	民心之不靜
minzu sixiang	民族思想
minyue	民約
minzhi	民智
minzhong	民衆
minzhu	民主
minzu	民族
minzu diguo zhuyi	民族帝國主義
minzu zhuyi	民族主義
Mozi	墨子
Murata Yūjirō	村田雄二郎
Nanhai	南海
“Nanhai tongren ju”	南海同人局
Nanxuehui	南學會
“Nanxuehui diyici jiangyi”	南學會第一次講義
Nian	捻
Nian Gengyao	年羹堯
niuma nuli	牛馬奴隸
nongfu	農夫
nuli	奴隸
nüwu	女巫

“Ōchō kokka shakai, kindai Chūgoku no baai”
 王朝國家社會、近代中國の場合

Ou Jujia	歐桀甲
Oushi yanjiuhui	歐事研究會
Ouyang Xiu	歐陽修
Ouyang Yuqian	歐陽予倩
Ouyang Zhonggu	歐陽中鵠
panni	叛逆
“Pengdang lun”	朋黨論
ping	平
pingdeng	平等
Ping-Li-Liu	萍醴濁
Pingmin jiaoyutuan	平民教育團
pingquan	平權
posi ligong	破私立公
Pu Dianjun	蒲殿俊
qi	氣
qiangzhili	強制力
qiangzhi zuzhi zhi guojia	強制組織之國家
qianji	鈐記
Qianlong	乾隆
qianshan suo	遷善所
Qilao hui	耆老會
Qing (prince)	慶
“Qingnian de liangjian shiye”	青年的兩件事業
qingyi	清議
<i>Qingyi bao</i>	清議報
qinshou zhi guo	禽獸之國
<i>Qiushu</i>	旭書
quan	權
quanli	權利
quanzian xiafang	權限下放
<i>Quanxue pian</i>	勸學篇
qun	群
qunxue	群學

<i>Qunxue yiyan</i>	群學肄言
<i>qunzhong</i>	群衆
<i>Rangshu</i>	攘書
<i>ren</i>	仁
<i>rencai</i>	人才
<i>rendao</i>	人道
<i>renmin</i>	人民
<i>renqun</i>	人群
<i>renweide</i>	人爲的
<i>renxia</i>	仁俠
<i>renxin</i>	仁心
<i>Renxue</i>	仁學
<i>renyi jiehe zhi shehui</i>	任意結合之社會
<i>Riben guozhi</i>	日本國志
<i>rōnin</i>	浪人
<i>Rushu zhenlun</i>	儒術真論
<i>sai</i>	塞
<i>Sandian hui</i>	三點會
<i>san'gang</i>	三綱
<i>san'gang wuchang</i>	三綱五常
<i>Sanhe hui</i>	三合會
<i>sanqu</i>	三區
<i>sanxia wuyi</i>	三俠五義
<i>se</i>	塞
<i>Shakai to kokka</i>	社會と國家
<i>shanghui</i>	商會
<i>Shangxue hui</i>	商學會
<i>shantang</i>	善堂
<i>Shaonian Zhongguo xuehui</i>	少年中國學會
<i>shehui</i>	社會
<i>“Shehui geming--Eguoshi de geming”</i>	社會革命--俄國式的革命
<i>shehuide guanxi</i>	社會的關係
<i>shehuide yaoqiu</i>	社會的要求
<i>shehui juntuan</i>	社會軍團
<i>shehui nei zhi zhixu</i>	社會內之秩序
<i>“Shehui--qunzhong”</i>	社會--群衆

<i>Shengshi weiyán</i>	盛世危言
<i>shenliang</i>	紳糧
<i>shenshang</i>	紳商
<i>shenshi</i>	紳士
<i>shi</i>	實
<i>Shibao</i>	時報
<i>shidafu</i>	士大夫
<i>shidao zhi shi</i>	市道之世
“Shijuying lu bishi”	石菊影廬筆識
<i>shimin</i>	市民
<i>Shiwu bao</i>	時物報
<i>Shi Xiang</i>	師襄
<i>shizhe</i>	識者
<i>shizhen</i>	市鎮
<i>Shōhō gakkō</i>	商法學校
<i>Shōhō kaigijō</i>	商法會議場
<i>shouquan yu min</i>	受權於民
<i>shouzhi</i>	受制
<i>Shujing</i>	書經
<i>shulou</i>	疏漏
<i>Shun</i>	舜
<i>Shuoqun</i>	說群
<i>si</i>	私
<i>side</i>	私德
<i>sihui</i>	私會
<i>si jie huidang</i>	私結會黨
<i>simin</i>	四民
<i>shehui shang zhi zhixu</i>	社會上之秩序
<i>shehui xinli</i>	社會心理
<i>shehui zuzhide quexian</i>	社會組織的缺陷
<i>shehuixue</i>	社會學
<i>Shenbao</i>	申報
<i>sheng</i>	聖
<i>shengcai</i>	聖裁
<i>shengren</i>	聖人
<i>shengshang</i>	聖上
<i>shengshi</i>	聲勢

sishu gailiang hui	私塾改良會
“Siwei yikun tai duanshu xu”	思緯壹壺臺短書敘
Soejima Taneomi	副島種臣
Song Jiaoren	宋教仁
sudang	素黨
Sun Zhongshan	孫中山
suwang	素王
Su Yu	蘇輿
“Suzhou Guanian dajie shimin gongshe jianzhang”	
	蘇州觀前大街市民公社簡章
Suzhou shimin gongshe	蘇州市民公社
taiping	太平
taiping shi	太平世
Tang Caichang	唐才常
Tang Hualong	湯化龍
Tang Shouqian	湯壽潛
Tan Sitong	譚嗣同
Tan Yankai	譚延闔
ti	體
Tian Chi	天池
tianfu	天賦
tianfu renquan	天賦人權
tianmin	天民
tianxia	天下
tianxia qun	天下群
Tianyan lun	天演論
Tianyi	天義
tianzhi	天職
tianzi	天子
ting	廳
tong	通
tongbao	同胞
tongjing zhiyong	通經致用
Tongmenghui	同盟會
tongqing	通情
Tongyi dang	統一黨

Tongzhi	同治
tongzhi	同知
tongzhiquan	統治權
tu	圖
tuanlian	團練
tuodu	拓都
tuogu gaizhi	托古改制
wangdao	王道
Wang Fuzhi	王夫之
wangguo zhi min	亡國之民
Wang Kangnian	汪康年
Wang Tao	王韜
Wang Xianqian	王先謙
Wang Yangming	王陽明
Wang Zhengyi	王正誼
weishu	緯書
weixin	威信
wen	文
“Wenda”	問答
wenhua	文化
wenming	文明
Wenti	文悌
woguo shehui suoyou yingshi erqi	我國社會所由應時而起
wu	武
wusi	無私
<i>Wuxu bianfa</i>	戊戌變法
wuye jieji	無業階級
wuye youmin	無業游民
Wu Yue	吳樾
xiadeng shehui	下等社會
xialiu shehui	下流社會
xian	縣
xiang	鄉
xiangcun	鄉村
xiangdong	鄉董
xiangguan	鄉官

<i>Xiangjiang pinglun</i>	襄江評論
xianglao	鄉老
xiangshe	鄉社
Xiang-Yue	湘粵
xiangyue	鄉約
xiaomie	消滅
xiecong zhe	脅從者
<i>Xinchao</i>	新潮
<i>Xinchou tiaoyue</i>	辛丑條約
xing minquan	興民權
“Xing suanxue yi”	興算學議
xingtong hua wai	形同化外
Xing Zhong hui	興中會
“Xin Hunan”	新湖南
xin li	心力
xinmin	新民
“Xin min shuo”	新民說
“Xinning bo Jinman gong jiazhuhan”	新寧伯鑾蠻公家傳
<i>Xin qingnian</i>	新青年
“Xin shiming”	新釋名
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Yang Guang	楊廣

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Yang Wending	楊文鼎
yangwu	洋物
Yang Xiuqing	楊秀清
Yang Xuangan	楊玄感
yanlun	言論
Yao	堯
yaoni	公匿
Ye Dehui	葉德輝
yi	夷
yiban renmin	一般人民
yidi zhi guo	夷狄之國
yiji	一己
yijun wanmin	一君萬民
Yikuang	奕劻
yingsi	營私
yinhao	銀號
yitong chuishang	一統垂裳
yi yuan ("Yiyuan")	議院
yong	用
Yongjia	永嘉
yongli	傭隸
Yongzheng	雍正
youfa zhi qun	有法之群
youmin	莠民
youye jieji	有業階級
you yi xue ji you yi bao	有一學即有一報
you yi xue ji you yi hui	有一學即有一會
youzhi	幼稚
you zhong gong jue	由衆公決
Yuan Shikai	袁世凱
yuanqi	原氣
“Yuan qiang”	原強
Yuedong	粵東
yulun	輿論
yumin	愚民

zaiyou	在宥
zao gongmin	造公民
zao shehui	造社會
zeikou	賊寇
Zeng Guofan	曾國藩
Zhang Binglin	章炳麟
Zhang Jian	張謇
Zhang Kaiyuan	章開沅
Zhang Nanxian	張難先
Zhang Shizhao	章士釗
Zhang Zhidong	張之洞
Zhang Zai	張載
Zhang Zhidong	張之洞
Zhao Erxun	趙爾巽
zhawei zongli	札委總理
zhe	哲
zhen	鎮
Zheng Guanying	鄭觀應
zheng huizhang	正會長
zhengti	政體
Zheng Xiaoxu	鄭孝胥
zhenya	鎮壓
zhengzhi zhi jihui	政治之機會
zhi	直
zhishi	志士
zhishi jieji	知識階級
zhiwen	質問
zhixing heyi	知行合一
“Zhi yan”	治言
zhong	忠
Zhongguo	中國
“Zhongguo jiruo suyuan lun”	中國積弱溯源論
Zhongguo minyue jingyi	中國民約精義
Zhongguo zhexue shi	中國哲學史
Zhonghai	中海
Zhonghua gemingdang	中華革命黨
zhongliu yishang	中流以上

“Zhongyi jiazhuan”	忠義家傳
zhou	州
Zhou Han	周漢
zhuanshu	篆書
zhuanzhi jieji	專制階級
Zhuangzi	莊子
zhudong zhe	主動者
zhuhou jingji	諸侯經濟
zhuquan	主權
zhuquan benyu guomin quanti	主權本於國民全體
zhusheng	諸生
Zhu Xi	朱熹
Zhu Ying	朱英
<i>Zhuzi xue hueshuo</i>	諸子學略說
zichan jieji	資產階級
Ziguang	紫光
Zili hui	自立會
Ziyiju	諮議局
ziyou	自由
Zizhengyuan	資政院
zizhi	自治
zizhi qi xiangyi	自治其鄉矣
zizhi zhi quan	自治之權
zizhu	自主
Zongli Yamen	總理衙門
Zou Rong	鄒容
zuogong ziyou zhi zhi	作工自由之制
zuguo	祖國
zunyan	尊嚴



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Index

A

Accumulating Rope Hall, 269
Anti-Opium Association, 220-221
Aristotle, on citizenship, 9-10, 12, 17
Arrow War (1856), 119
Assassination, political parties and, 48, 50-51
Assemblies, local self-government movement and, 131-134, 187-188
Associations. *See* Civic associations; Clan organizations; Grouping and society; Secret societies; *specific associations*; Study societies
Autonomy of individual. *See* Grouping and society; Individualism; Local self-government movement

B

Bai Yi
on division of society, 168
on secret societies, 168-169
on uprisings, 167, 170, 171-172, 174-175
Bolshevik Revolution, 275
Boxer Rebellion, 171
citizenship and, 25
grouping and society and, 260, 267
state and society relations and, 115, 116
Britain
constitutional government of England, 154-155, 156-158

Britain (continued)
local self-government of, 184, 192, 199
West River incident, 221-222
Buddhism, Tan Sitong on, 90-91

C

Canton
concept of society and, 217-223
anti-Japanese boycott (1908) and, 222
Anti-Opium Association and, 220-221
Chen Huipu and, 218-223, 227
Merchant Association for the Maintenance of Public Order and, 218
Merchant Self-Government Association and, 218, 221-223, 227
Nine Charitable Halls and, 219
philanthropic institutions and, 219-221
West River incident and, 221-222
Capitalism
citizenship consciousness and, 40
influence on local self-government movement, 183, 184
Chang Hao, 61-62, 73, 77
Chang Hao, Old Text/New Text
Confucian Classics and, 61-62
Changsha, Hunan, rice riots (1910), 165, 168, 171, 172-175, 180n28
Chen Chi, 188

Chen Duxiu, 53, 54, 57
 Chen Huipu, concept of society and, 218-223, 227
 Chen Leng, 168, 179n14
 Chinese Revolutionary Party, 51, 53
 Chinese Youth Study Society, 55
 Chuansha, Jiangsu, anti-self-government uprising (1911), 165, 167, 170, 172, 176-178
 Citizens' Association, 205
 Citizenship
 Aristotle on, 9-10, 12, 17
 Boxer Rebellion and, 25
 Confucianism and, 3-4, 17, 24-25, 31n1
 morality and, 3-4, 5-6, 18, 32n11
 constitutional government and, 14, 16-23
 economics and, 7-8
 Communism and, 7-8
 education and, 5, 17, 23, 26
 elections and, 16
 equality and, 13-14
 French Revolution and, 11, 12, 13
 Fu Sinian on, 4
 individualism and, 6, 20
 autonomy and, 6, 13-15, 17-18
 international, 6-7
 Kang Youwei on, 4, 22
 Liang Qichao on, 4, 5-6, 12
 elitism and, 17-18
 grouping and, 15, 19-20
 nationalism and, 15-19, 35n47
 Lin Xie on, 20-21
 Liu Shipei on, 12-13, 15, 16
 nationalism and, 4, 15-19, 32n4, 35n47
 Darwinism and, 15
 people's rights and, 13
 public morality and, 5-6, 18
 racism and, 6-7, 15, 20-23
 Revolution of 1911 and, 4, 13-14, 23-26
 Rousseau on, 11, 12, 14, 15
 social class and, 14
 Tan Sitong on, 4-5, 23
 Wang Jingwei on, 21-22
 Western culture influence on, 3-4, 6-7, 13
 historically, 8-13, 33n22

Citizenship (*continued*)
 Yuan Shikai and, 16, 23-25
 Zhang Binglin on, 4-5, 14, 15
 See also Society, concept of; State and society relations
 Citizenship consciousness
 bourgeois democracy and, 40-41, 49
 capitalism and, 40
 civic associations and, 51-57
 Confucianism and, 39, 40, 52, 54
 education and, 42-43
 grouping and, 42
 imperialism and, 39-40
 individual autonomy and, 41, 43, 44
 intellectuals and, 41-42, 43, 44, 45, 54-55, 57
 May Fourth Movement and, 55
 New Culture movement and, 53-57
 commercial associations and, 56-57
 intellectuals and, 54-55, 57
 merchants and, 55, 56
 students and, 54-56, 57
 workers and, 55, 56
 people's rights and, 40-41
 political parties and
 assassination and, 48, 50-51
 association proliferation and, 46-47
 elections and, 46-48
 journalism and, 44-45, 51
 National Alliance (Tongmenghui), 44, 46
 Nationalist Party (revolutionaries), 46-52
 Progressive Party (constitutionalists), 46-52
 private property and, 40-41
 reform movement of 1898 and, 41-45
 revolutionary organizations and, 41-45
 intellectuals and, 41, 43, 44, 45
 study societies and, 43-45, 51, 55, 56
 Western culture influence and, 41-48, 279-281
 Western affairs movement and, 41, 43
 Western democracy and, 44, 46-48, 53-54
 See also Journalism; Society, concept of; State and society relations

Civic associations
 in ancient China, 144-145
 citizenship consciousness and, 51-57
 commercial associations, 56-57
 common interest and, 145-146
 imperialist prevention of, 142, 143, 148-149
 individual autonomy and, 143, 147-148
 internationalism and, 143, 146, 159
 journalism and, 143-145, 147-150
 education and, 143-144
 nationalism and, 144
 Liang Qichao on, 143-145, 146, 147, 148
 Mai Menghua on, 146, 148
 New Culture movement and, 53-57
 Ou Jujia on, 147-148
 proliferation of, 46-47
 Republicanism and, 232, 235, 236
 role in nationalism, 142-143, 144, 146, 159-160, 212-214, 217-223, 227
 Tang Caichang on, 145
 Western culture influence on, 142-144, 145-146, 147, 148-149, 159-160
 Yan Fu on, 143
See also Clan organizations; Grouping and society; Secret societies; *specific associations*; Study societies

Civil service examination
 abolition of, 172, 204
 grouping and society and, 273

Civil society, Liang Qichao on, 232-236, 250-253
 balance of state and society and, 233, 234, 251
 Confucianism and, 233, 239, 253
 elitism and, 232, 233-234, 236
 public sphere and, 234-235, 250-251, 256n52
 Western culture influence and, 233, 234-236
See also Citizenship; Citizenship consciousness; Republicanism; Society, concept of; State and society relations

Clan organizations, grouping and, 259, 260, 264-265, 273-274

Collectivism
 group strength and, 259-260, 261-264, 276n7
 individual strength and, 259-260, 261-263, 276n7
 society and, 223
 collective strength and, 259-260, 267
 individual strength and, 259-260, 267, 270-271, 272, 273
See also Grouping and society; Individualism

Commoners' Education Society, 56

Communes, 184

Communism, citizenship and, 7-8

Communist Party
 citizenship consciousness and, 54
 concept of society and, 213, 214, 225, 226, 227, 280

Confucianism
 citizenship and, 3-4, 17, 24-25, 31n1
 morality and, 3-4, 5-6, 18, 32n11
 citizenship consciousness and, 39, 40, 52, 54
 concept of the people and, 98-99, 279
 journalism and, 171, 180n23
 Liang Qichao and, 233, 239, 253
 political parties and, 52, 54
 support of imperialism, 39
 Tan Sitong on, 83, 91-92, 93, 98-99
 three bonds of, 39, 77, 83
 veneration of sages and, 40
See also Old Text/New Text
 Confucian Classics controversy

Confucian Society, 52

Constitutional government
 bureaucratic/elite power and, 131-135
 cabinet system in, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156-157, 158-159
 citizenship and, 14, 16-23
 citizen's responsibility for, 150-152
 elite and, 150-151, 152
 civic associations and
 in ancient China, 144-145
 common interest and, 145-146
 imperialist prevention of, 142, 143, 148-149
 individual autonomy and, 143, 147-148
 internationalism and, 143, 146, 159

Constitutional government (*continued*)
 journalism and, 143-145, 147-150
 Liang Qichao on, 143-145, 146, 147, 148
 Mai Menghua on, 146, 148
 nationalism and, 142-143, 144, 146, 159-160
 Ou Jujia on, 147-148
 Tang Caichang on, 145
 Western culture influence on, 142-144, 145-146, 147, 148-149, 159-160
 Yan Fu on, 143
 control of taxes in, 153, 156-157, 160
 of England, 154-155, 156-158
 under imperialism, 153-155, 156
 imperialist prevention of, 145, 152
 of Japan, 153, 155-156
 journalism and, 145, 154, 155
 Liang Qichao on, 150-152, 153-154, 158, 159
 local self-government movement and, 193, 194, 195-197, 206
 nationalism and, 142-143, 150-151, 152, 159-160
 parliament in, 154-155, 156-157, 159
 Principles of the Constitution, 121-123
 Progressive Party (constitutionalists), 46-52
 Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China, 46, 47, 49
 representative parties in, 152-155, 156, 157, 158, 160
 republicanism and, 232, 233, 237-241, 250-253
 Song Jiaoren on, 155-156, 157, 159
 state guidance in, 151-152
 Western culture influence on, 152-153, 154, 156, 160
 Zhang Shizhao on, 154-155, 156-157, 159
See also Political parties, citizenship consciousness and; Republicanism
 Constitutional monarchism. *See* Imperialism
Current Affairs Journal, 44-45

D

Danyang, Jiangsu uprising (1909), 165, 167-168
 Darwin. *See* Social organism theory
 Democracy. *See* Western culture influence
 Di Baoxian, 168, 179n14
 Double Ten holiday, 23-24

E

East India Company, 146
 Economics
 capitalism and
 citizenship consciousness and, 40
 local self-government movement and, 183, 184
 citizenship and, 7-8
 Communism and, 7-8
 taxation and
 constitutional government and, 153, 156-157, 160
 imperialism and, 153
 Education
 citizenship and, 5, 17, 23, 26
 citizenship consciousness and, 42-43
 Commoners' Education Society, 56
 journalism role in, 143-144, 169
 local self-government movement and, 206-207
 Republicanism and, 251, 252
 Elder Persons Association, 269
 Elections
 citizenship and, 16
 local self-government movement and, 188, 205, 208
 political parties and, 46-48
 Elitism
 in journalism, 165-166, 177-178
 Liang Qichao and
 citizenship and, 17-18
 civil society and, 232, 233-234, 236
See also Local self-government movement
 England. *See* Britain
 Equality
 citizenship and, 13-14

Equality (*continued*)
 people's rule and, 83, 87-91
 Tan Sitong on, 87-88, 90
See also People's rights

Europe
 influence on concept of society, 226-227
 study societies of, 51, 56
See also specific countries

European Diligent-Work Frugal-Study Society, 56

F

Fangbian Hospital, 219

Feudalism, rise of local elite autonomy and, 126-127, 129, 138, 183-184, 208

Foreign policy. *See* Internationalism

France
 French Revolution, 11, 12, 13
 local self-government of, 185, 199

Freedom of speech, 232, 251

French Revolution, 11, 12, 13

Fu Sinian
 on citizenship, 4
 on grouping and society, 270-273, 275

G

Germany, local self-government
 movement and, 184, 185, 199, 224

Great Sword Society, 171

Grouping and society
 Bolshevik Revolution and, 275
 Boxer Rebellion and, 260, 267
 citizenship consciousness and, 42
 Fu Sinian on, 270-273, 275
 Huang Zunxian on, 264, 265, 266
 Kang Youwei on, 260, 267-270
 Liang Qichao on, 15, 19-20, 260, 262-264, 267, 269-270, 273
 Liu Shipei on, 264, 265-266
 May Fourth Movement and, 260, 269-270, 272, 275
 nationalism and, 258-259, 262, 267-268, 273-275
 popular power and, 262

Grouping and society (*continued*)
 public morality and, 212, 215-216, 218, 262-264
 relationship between, 259-260, 266-267
 science of group strength and, 214-215, 259-267, 276n1
 clan organizations and, 259, 260, 264-265, 273-274
 collective strength and, 259-260, 261-264
 collectivism and, 259, 261, 276n7
 Darwinian social organism theory and, 15, 214-215, 259-260, 261-262, 274-275, 276n9
 individual strength and, 259-260, 261-263, 276n7
 local self-government and, 261, 274-275
 social organizations and, 270, 271
 secret societies and, 264-266
 study societies and, 260
 society and, 214-215, 259-260, 266-275
 civil service examination and, 273
 collective strength and, 259-260, 267
 collectivism and, 223, 259
 creating, 267-268, 270-273
 Darwinian social organism theory and, 214-215, 259-260, 266-267, 269, 271, 273
 individual strength and, 259-260, 267, 270-271, 272, 273
 local self-government and, 268-270
 Mao Zedong and, 273-275
 order vs. order within and, 271-272
 separation of politics and, 260, 269-270
 Western culture influence on, 42, 260, 261, 262, 268-269, 270-271
 Yan Fu on, 259, 261-262, 266
See also Civic associations;
 Individualism; Society, concept of; State and society relations; Study societies

Guanqian Thoroughfare Citizens' Association, 136-137

Guomindang, concept of society and, 213, 214, 225

Han Learning, 62, 64, 65-66, 67
 He Qi, 189-190
 Historical factors
 in foreign policy, 119-120
 in local self-government movement, 206-208
 in Old Text/New Text Confucian Classics controversy, 63-65
 in Western culture influence on citizenship, 8-13, 33n22
 Huang Xing, 46, 51
 Huang Zunxian (1848-1905), 129
 on grouping and society, 264, 265, 266
 on local self-government movement, 192
 on local self-government movement, 192
 Hui, 167, 172, 176-177
 Hu Liyuan, local self-government and, 189-190
 Hunan reform movement
 project of alliances (Tan Sitong) and, 99-104
 security bureau and, 101-102, 110n96
 study societies and, 100-101, 129
 Hundred Days Reform movement, 113, 114, 115

I

Imperial Daily, 154
 Imperialism
 attitude of officials/subjects under, 39-40
 attitude toward sages under, 40
 bureaucratic/elite power and, 130-131, 134-135
 citizenship consciousness and, 39-40
 Confucianism support of, 39
 constitutional government and, 145, 152, 153-155, 156
 constitutional monarchy and
 Liang Qichao on, 232, 233, 237-250, 252-253
 Republicanism and, 232, 233, 237-250, 252-253
 Yuan Shikai and, 233, 237, 239, 240, 241-250, 252-253

Imperialism (*continued*)
 control over local self-government and, 184, 185-186, 199-203
 policies and, 201-203
 social conditions and, 200-201
 internationalism and, 116-123
 prevention of civic associations by, 142, 143, 148-149
 Protect the Nation Society and, 114-116
 rise of local elite autonomy and, 123-128
 Tan Sitong on, 83, 86-87, 88-90, 91-95
 taxation and, 153
 Independent Army uprising (1901), 168
Independent Weekly, 51-52
 Individualism
 autonomy and
 citizenship and, 6, 13-15, 17-18, 20
 citizenship consciousness and, 41, 43, 44
 civic associations and, 143, 147-148
 Tan Sitong and, 90-92
 science of group strength and, 259-260, 261-263, 276n7
 society and, 259-260, 267, 270-271, 272, 273
 Industry, local self-government
 movement and, 194-195, 205-206
 Intellectuals
 citizenship consciousness and, 41, 43, 44, 45, 54-55, 57
 local self-government movement and, 184-199
 early twentieth century ideas and, 193-196
 introduction of ideas and, 186-189
 reform movement of 1898 and, 189-193
 New Culture movement and, 54-55, 57
 political parties and, 45
 Western affairs movement and, 41, 43
 Western democracy and, 44
 See also Liang Qichao (1873-1929); specific names;
 Tan Sitong (1854-1898)
 Internationalism
 citizenship and, 6-7

Internationalism (continued)
 importance of civic associations to, 143, 146, 159
 state and society relations and, 116-123
 foreign policy history and, 119-120
 Taiwan Incident (1871), 117-118

J

Japan, 55, 56, 146
 boycott by Canton (1908), 222
 constitutional government of, 153, 155-156
 local self-government of, 185, 193, 199, 202
 Russo-Japanese War, 131
 Sino-Japanese War (1904-1905), 41, 86, 113, 120, 189, 192, 193, 200, 260
 Taiwan Incident (1871), 117-118

Jiangnan Association, 269

Journalism
 advocacy roles in
 Confucianism and, 171, 180n23
 cultural negotiation, 175-178
 cultural translation, 166, 176-177
 education, 143-144, 169
 popular grievances, 170
 regional newspapers and, 170-171, 180n21

Bai Yi and
 division of society and, 168
 secret societies and, 168-169
 uprisings and, 167, 170, 171-172, 174-175

bureaucratic/elite power and, 128, 130-131, 132, 133
 Chen Leng, 168, 179n14
 civic associations and, 143-145, 147-150
 education and, 143-144
 nationalism and, 144
 constitutional government and, 145, 154, 155

Di Baoxian, 168, 179n14
 elitism in, 165-166, 177-178
 Hui, 167, 172, 176-177
 modes of, 169-170
 nationalism and, 165-166, 171

Journalism (continued)
 New Policies and, 165, 167, 177
 political parties and, 44-45, 51
 popular religion and, 177-178
 societal division and, 167-169
 societal division in
 secret societies and, 168-169, 179n13
 uprising ringleaders and, 167-168
 Tian Chi, 172-173
 uprisings and, 165-166, 178n1
 abolition of examination system and, 172
 Changsha, Hunan, rice riots (1910), 165, 168, 171, 172-175, 180n28
 Chuansha, Jiangsu, anti-self-government (1911), 165, 167, 170, 172, 176-178
 Danyang, Jiangsu (1909), 165, 167-168
 explanations for, 171-175
 Independent Army (1901), 168
 Laiyang, Shandong (1910), 165, 178
 Ping-Li-Liu (1906), 165, 167, 168, 170, 171, 174, 181n34
 regional newspapers and, 170-171, 180n21
 revolutionary influence on, 173-175
 ringleaders of, 167-168
 Xi Song, 168, 171, 173-174
See also Old Text/New Text
 Confucian Classics controversy
Journal of Disinterested Criticism, 44-45

K

Kang Guangren, 44
 Kang Youwei (1858-1927), political views of, 44, 52
 citizenship, 4, 22
 grouping and society, 260, 267-270
 local self-government movement, 193, 196-199
Old Text/New Text Confucian Classics, 69-72, 73, 75, 80n17
 Protect the Nation Society, 113-116
 state and society relations, 125
 Western affairs movement, 43

L

Laiyang, Shandong uprising (1910), 165, 178
 Liang Qichao (1873-1929), political views of
 assassination, 51
 citizenship and, 4, 5-6, 12
 elitism and, 17-18
 grouping and, 15, 19-20
 nationalism and, 15-19, 35n47
 citizenship consciousness, 41, 43-44, 45
 civic associations, 143-145, 146, 147, 148
 civil society, 232-236, 250-253
 balance of state and society and, 233, 234, 251
 Confucianism and, 233, 239, 253
 elitism and, 232, 233-234, 236
 public sphere and, 234-235, 250-251, 256n52
 Western culture influence and, 233, 234-236
 concept of society, 212, 215-216, 217, 223-225
 constitutional government, 150-152, 153-154, 158, 159
 grouping and society and, 260, 262-264, 267, 269-270, 273
 citizenship and, 15, 19-20
 local self-government movement, 190-191, 193, 196-199
 nationalism, 15-19, 35n47
 Old Text/New Text Confucian Classics, 71, 73-74
 personal political ambitions and, 234, 254n6
 political parties, 45, 49-50, 51, 53
 republicanism and
 civic associations and, 232, 235, 236
 constitutional government and, 232, 233, 237-241, 250-2530
 constitutional monarchism and, 232, 233, 237-250, 252-253
 defense of, 237-241
 democracy and, 232-236, 241, 245, 250-252

Liang Qichao (1873-1929) (continued)
 education and, 251, 252
 freedom of speech and, 232, 251
 law and leaders and, 241-244
 national polity and, 237-241, 243, 244-250, 254n12
 political institutions and, 238, 241, 243, 244, 250
 politicians' benefits and, 243, 255n14
 public opinion and, 239
 rational public debate and, 232, 251
 rhetoric of, 243, 244-250
 state power limitations and, 232
 state and society relations, 120-121, 128-129
 Western affairs movement, 43
 Liao Ping, 75, 76
 Lin Xie, 20-21
 Liu Fenglu, 65-66, 73
 Liu Shipei (1884-1919), 76-77
 on citizenship, 12-13, 15, 16
 on grouping and society, 264, 265-266
 Liu Xin, Old Text/New Text Confucian Classics and, 63, 64, 65, 66, 69, 76
 Local self-government movement
 assemblies and, 131-134, 187-188
 of Britain, 184, 192, 199
 bureaucratic/elite power and, 135-139, 195, 197-198, 204-205, 207
 constitutional government and, 131-135
 imperialism and, 130-131, 134-135
 journalism and, 130-131, 132, 133
 provincial assembly and, 131-134
 study societies and, 128-129
 communes and, 184
 constitutional government and, 193, 194, 195-197, 206
 education and, 206-207
 elections and, 188, 205, 208
 France and, 185, 199
 Germany and, 184, 185, 199
 grouping and society and, 268-270
 imperialism control over, 184, 185-186, 199-203
 policies and, 201-203
 social conditions and, 200-201
 industry and, 194-195, 205-206

Local self-government movement
(continued)

intellectual support (to 1905) and, 184-199
 Chen Chi, 188
 early twentieth century ideas and, 193-196
 He Qi, 189-190
 Huang Zunxian, 192
 Hu Liyuan, 189-190
 introduction of ideas and, 186-189
 Kang Youwei, 193, 196-199
 Liang Qichao, 190-191, 193, 196-199
 reform movement of 1898 and, 189-193
 Tang Zhen, 187-188
 Tan Sitong, 190, 191
 Yan Fu, 190, 191-192
 Zhang Jian, 193
 Zheng Guanying, 187-189
 Japan and, 185, 193, 199, 202
 parliament and, 187-188
 rise of elite autonomy and, 123-128, 135-139, 183
 constitutional government and, 131-135
 feudalism and, 126-127, 129, 138, 183-184, 208
 imperialism and, 123-128, 130-131, 134-135
 journalism and, 128, 130-131, 132, 133
 military descent and, 123-124
 provincial assembly and, 131-134
 social class reorganization and, 124-128, 204, 207
 study societies and, 128-129
 significance of, 203-208
 historical limits and, 206-208
 political development and, 203-206
 students and, 194-196
 township system and, 186, 188, 261, 268
 Western culture influence on, 184-192, 196-199
 capitalism and, 183, 184
 democracy and, 183, 184, 186, 187, 189
 Yuan Shikai and, 204

M

Mai Menghua, on civic associations, 146, 148
 Manchus
 Old Text/New Text Confucian Classics and, 63, 72-73, 74, 75
 Protect the Nation Society and, 114-115, 116
 racism and, 15, 21, 23, 63, 72-73, 74, 75, 86, 115, 116
 Tan Sitong on, 86, 93
 Mao Zedong, 273-275
 Marxism, social class and, 225, 226, 280-281
 Marxism Research Association, 56
 May Fourth Movement
 citizenship consciousness and, 55
 grouping and society and, 260, 269-270, 272, 275
 Merchant Association for the Maintenance of Public Order, 218
 Merchants
 citizenship consciousness and, 55, 56
 concept of society and, 218, 221-223, 227
See also Local self-government movement
 Merchant Self-Government Association, 218, 221-223, 227
 Military
 Arrow War (1856), 119
 Opium War (1840-1842), 113, 119, 186, 188
 rise of local elite autonomy and, 123-124
 Russo-Japanese War, 131
 Sino-Japanese War (1904-1905), 41, 86, 113, 120, 189, 192, 193, 200, 260
 Monarchism. *See* Imperialism
 Morality. *See* Public morality
 Movements
 Hunan reform movement
 project of alliances (Tan Sitong) and, 99-104
 security bureau and, 101-102, 110n96

Movements (continued)

- study societies and, 100-101, 129
- Hundred Days Reform movement, 113, 114, 115
- May Fourth Movement
 - citizenship consciousness and, 55
 - grouping and society and, 260, 269-270, 272, 275
- New Culture movement
 - citizenship consciousness and, 53-57
 - intellectuals and, 54-55, 57
 - students and, 54-56, 57
 - Western Democracy and, 53-54
- Movements,
 - Reform movement of 1898
 - citizenship consciousness and, 41-45
 - study societies arising from, 43-45
 - Western affairs movement, 41, 43
- See also* Local self-government movement; Military; Uprisings

N

- National Alliance (Tongmenghui), 44, 46
- See also* Nationalist Party
- Nationalism
 - citizenship and, 4, 15-19, 32n4, 35n47
 - Darwinism and, 15
 - concept of society and
 - disciplining a citizenry and, 215, 216, 217, 223, 227
 - emancipating a citizenry and, 216, 227, 228
 - people's rights and, 213, 228n3
 - role of civic associations and, 212-214, 217-223, 227
 - securing power and, 216
 - social class and, 214, 223-226
 - constitutional government and, 142-143, 150-151, 152, 159-160
 - grouping and society and, 258-259, 262, 267-268, 273-275
 - journalism and, 165-166, 171
 - Liang Qichao on, 15-19, 35n47
 - Old Text/New Text Confucian Classics and, 72-75, 78

Nationalism (continued)

- Protect the Nation Society and, 113-116
- role of civic associations in, 142-143, 144, 146, 159-160, 212-214, 217-223, 227
- study societies and, 144
- Western culture influence on, 74-75
- Nationalist Party (revolutionaries), 46-52
- National News*, 44-45
- National polity, 237-241, 243, 244-250, 254n12
- National Preservation Society, 43
- New Culture movement
 - citizenship consciousness and, 53-57
 - intellectuals and, 54-55, 57
 - students and, 54-56, 57
 - Western Democracy and, 53-54
- New Policies, 165, 167, 177
- New Youth*, 53-55
- Nine Charitable Halls, 219

O

- Old Text/New Text Confucian Classics controversy
 - Chang Hao and, 61-62
 - citizenship and, 63
 - Han dynasty and, 61-65
 - Han Learning and, 62, 64, 65-66, 67 in historical context, 63-65
 - Kang Youwei and, 69-72, 73, 75, 80n17
 - Liang Qichao and, 71, 73-74
 - Manchus and, 63, 72-73, 74, 75
 - New Text revival and, 65-66
 - climax of, 69-72
 - Confucian scriptural authority and, 61-63, 67-68, 70-71, 75-78
 - nationalism and, 63, 72-75, 78
 - reformism in, 66-68
 - rituals and laws and, 67-68
 - reformism to revolutionism and, 75-77
 - Western culture influence and, 61-63, 77-78
 - nationalism and, 74-75
- Opium War (1840-1842), 113, 119, 186, 188
- Ou Jujia, on civic associations, 147-148

P

Paris Peace Treaty, 55
 Parliament
 in constitutional government, 154-155, 156-157, 159
 local self-government movement and, 187-188
 political parties and, 47-48, 51
 Peace Planning Society, 52-53, 237
 "People, the" concept (Tan Sitong), 82-83, 96
 Confucianism and, 98-99, 279
 Hunan reform movement and, 99-104
 people/ruler dichotomy and, 99
 project of alliances and, 99-104
 security bureau and, 100-101, 110n96
 study societies and, 43, 100-101
 People's knowledge, 97-98
 People's rights
 citizenship and, 13
 citizenship consciousness and, 40-41
 nationalism and, 213, 228n3
 Tan Sitong on, 87-93, 97, 106n19
 People's rule, 83, 87-91
People's Stand, 155
 Philanthropic institutions, 219-221
 Ping-Li-Liu uprising (1906), 165, 167, 168, 170, 171, 174, 181n34
 Political parties, citizenship
 consciousness and
 assassination and, 48, 50-51
 association proliferation and, 46-47
 Chinese Revolutionary Party, 51, 53
 Communist Party, 54
 Confucianism and, 52, 54
 elections and, 46-48
 journalism and, 44-45, 51
 Liang Qichao on, 45, 49-50, 51, 53
 National Alliance (Tongmenghui), 44, 46
 Nationalist Party (revolutionaries), 46-52
 parliament campaign and, 47-48, 51
 political structure and, 46-47
 Progressive Party (constitutionalists), 46-52

Political parties, citizenship
 consciousness and (*continued*)
 Western democracy and, 46-48
 Yuan Shikai and, 48-49, 51-52, 53
See also Constitutional government; Republicanism
 Popular sovereignty, 88, 93
 Principles of the Constitution, 121-123
 Private property, citizenship
 consciousness and, 40-41
 Progressive Party (constitutionalists), 46-52
 Project of alliances (Tan Sitong), 99-104
 Protect the Nation Society, 113-116
 Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China, 46, 47, 49
 Public morality
 citizenship and, 5-6, 18
 Confucian morality and, 3-4, 17, 24-25, 31n1
 grouping and society and, 212, 215-216, 218, 262-264
 Pu Dianjun, constitutionalism and, 131-133

R

Racism
 anti-Manchu, 15, 21, 23, 63, 72-73, 74, 75, 86, 115, 116
 citizenship and, 6-7, 15, 20-23
 Reform movement of 1898
 citizenship consciousness and, 41-45
 study societies arising from, 43-45
Ren xue. *See* Tan Sitong (1854-1898)
 Republicanism, Liang Qichao on
 civic associations and, 232, 235, 236
 constitutional monarchism and, 232, 233, 237-250, 252-253
 defense of, 237-241
 democracy and, 232-236, 241, 245, 250-252
 education and, 251, 252
 freedom of speech and, 232, 251
 law and leaders and, 241-244
 national polity and, 237-241, 243, 244-250, 254n12
 political institutions and, 238, 241, 243, 244, 250

Republicanism, Liang Qichao on
(continued)
 politicians' benefits and, 243, 255n14
 public opinion and, 239
 rational public debate and, 232, 251
 rhetoric of, 243, 244-250
 state power limitations and, 232
See also Constitutional government;
 Political parties, citizenship
 consciousness and
 Revolution of 1911, 44, 46-47, 116, 237
 citizenship and, 4, 13-14, 23-26
 Rousseau, on citizenship, 11, 12, 14, 15
 Russian Research Association, 56
 Russo-Japanese War, 131

S

Sages. *See* Confucianism
 Secret societies
 Bai Yi on, 168-169
 grouping and society and, 264-266
 societal division and, 168-169, 179n13
 Security bureau, 101-102, 110n96
 Shanghai City Council (1905), 135
Shenbao, 128
Shibao (Eastern Times), 165, 168, 170,
 171, 173, 175, 178
Shiwu bao, 143-144
 Sino-Japanese War (1904-1905), 41, 86,
 113, 120, 189, 192, 193, 200, 260
 Social class
 citizenship and, 14
 concept of society and, 214, 223-226
 local self-government movement and,
 124-128, 204, 207
 Marxism and, 225, 226, 280-281
 Social organism theory (Darwin)
 grouping and, 15, 214-215, 259-260,
 261-262, 274-275, 276n9
 society and, 214-215, 259-260,
 266-267, 269, 271, 273
 Social organizations. *See* Civic
 associations; Clan organizations;
 Grouping and society; Secret
 societies; Study societies
 Society, concept of
 Canton and, 217-223
 anti-Japanese boycott (1908) and, 222

Society, concept of (*continued*)
 Anti-Opium Association and,
 220-221
 Chen Huipu and, 218-223, 227
 Merchant Association for the
 Maintenance of Public Order
 and, 218
 Merchant Self-Government
 Association and, 218, 221-223,
 227
 Nine Charitable Halls and, 219
 philanthropic institutions and,
 219-221
 West River incident and, 221-222
 Communist Party and, 213, 214, 225,
 226, 227, 280
 European influence on, 226-227
 Guomindang and, 213, 214, 225
 Liang Qichao on, 212, 215-216, 217,
 223-225
 Marxism and, 225, 226
 nationalism and
 disciplining a citizenry and, 215,
 216, 217, 223, 227
 emancipating a citizenry and, 216,
 227, 228
 people's rights and, 213, 228n3
 role of civic associations and,
 212-214, 217-223, 227
 securing power and, 216
 social class and, 214, 223-226
 sociologists and, 214-215
 Yan Fu on, 214-215
See also Grouping and society; State
 and society relations
 Society for Deliberation on the Building
 of the Republic, 158
 Society for the Study of European
 Affairs, 51
 Society for the Study of the Sages, 147
 Society to Protect the Emperor, 44
 Sociology, concept of society and,
 214-215
 Song Jiaoren, on constitutional
 government, 155-156, 157, 159
 Southern Study Society, 43, 100-101,
 129, 190, 192
 Spencer, Herbert (social organism
 theory), 15, 214-215, 259-260, 261

State and society relations

- Boxer Rebellion and, 115, 116
- bureaucratic/elite power and, 135-139
 - constitutional government and, 131-135
 - imperialism and, 130-131, 134-135
- journalism and, 130-131, 132, 133
- provincial assembly and, 131-134
- study societies and, 128-129

Guanqian Thoroughfare Citizens' Association and, 136-137

Hundred Days Reform movement and, 113, 114, 115

internationalism and, 116-123

- foreign policy history and, 119-120
- imperialism and, 116-123
- Taiwan Incident (1871) and, 117-118

Liang Qichao on, 120-121, 128-129

Principles of the Constitution and, 121-123

Protect the Nation Society and, 113-116

- imperialism and, 114-116
- Manchus and, 114-115, 116
- national community concept and, 113, 114, 115

rise of local elite autonomy and, 123-128, 135-139

- feudalism and, 126-127, 129, 138, 183-184, 208
- imperialism and, 123-128
- journalism and, 128
- military descent and, 123-124
- social class reorganization and, 124-128

Shanghai City Council (1905) and, 135

Suzhou Citizens' Association and, 135-136, 137

Western culture influence on, 119

See also Grouping and society; Local self-government movement; Society, concept of

Strengthening Study Society, 43

Students

- local self-government movement and, 194-196
- New Culture movement and, 54-56, 57

Study societies

- arising from reform movement of 1898, 43-45
- bureaucratic/elite power and, 128-129
- citizenship consciousness and, 43-45, 51, 55, 56
- European, 51, 56
- grouping and society and, 260
- Hunan reform movement and, 100-101, 129
- nationalism and, 144
- Tang Caichang on, 43, 45

See also Civic associations; Grouping and society; *specific study societies*

Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), 44, 46, 50, 51, 53, 118

Suzhou Citizens' Association, 135-136, 137

T

Taiping Rebellion, 94, 116

Taiwan Incident (1871), 117-118

Tang Caichang, 160

- civic associations and, 145
- study societies and, 43, 45

Tang Zhen, local self-government and, 187-188

Tan Sitong (1854-1898)

- citizenship and, 4-5, 23
- concept of the people and, 82-83, 96, 98-104
- Confucianism and, 98-99
- Hunan reform movement and, 99-104
- people/ruler dichotomy and, 99
- project of alliances and, 99-104
- security bureau and, 100-101, 110n96
- study societies and, 43, 100-101

local self-government movement and, 190, 191

Ren xue text of

- Buddhism in, 90-91
- communication in, 88, 91
- Confucianism in, 91-92, 93
- equality in, 87-88, 90
- "Great Unity" concept in, 90
- imperialism in, 83, 86-87, 88-90, 91-95

Tan Sitong (1854-1898) (*continued*)
 individual autonomy in, 90-92
 intellectuals in, 96-98
 Manchus in, 86, 93
 order restoration in, 91
 people's knowledge in, 97-98
 people's rights in, 87-93, 97, 106n19
 people's rule in, 83, 87-91, 106n19
 popular sovereignty in, 88, 93
 rebellion in, 91-95
 reception of, 104-105
 "roving swordsman" in, 96-97
 Western culture influence in, 86-88,
 90, 92, 95

Taiping Rebellion and, 94
 Western democracy and, 82-83, 88, 92
 "Zhi yan" text of
 barbarian spheres in, 84-86, 87
 civilized spheres in, 83-86
 three bonds of Confucianism in, 83

Taxation
 constitutional government and, 153,
 156-157, 160
 imperialism and, 153
 Three Points Society, 171
 Tiananmen Square (1989), 236
 Tian Chi, 172-173
 Township system, local self-government
 movement and, 186, 188, 261, 268
 Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895), 25

U

Uprisings
 Boxer Rebellion, 25, 115, 116, 171,
 260, 267
 journalism and, 165-166, 178n1
 abolition of examination system and,
 172
 Bai Yi and, 167, 170, 171-172,
 174-175
 Changsha, Hunan, rice riots (1910),
 165, 168, 171, 172-175,
 180n28
 Chuansha, Jiangsu,
 anti-self-government (1911),
 165, 167, 170, 172, 176-178
 Danyang, Jiangsu (1909), 165,
 167-168

Uprisings (*continued*)
 explanations for uprisings and,
 171-175
 Independent Army (1901), 168
 Laiyang, Shandong (1910), 165, 178
 Ping-Li-Liu (1906), 165, 167, 168,
 170, 171, 174, 181n34
 regional newspapers and, 170-171,
 180n21
 revolutionary influence on uprisings
 and, 173-175
 ringleaders of uprisings and,
 167-168
 Revolution of 1911, 44, 46-47, 116,
 237
 citizenship and, 4, 13-14, 23-26
 Taiping Rebellion, 94, 116
 White Lotus Rebellion (1796-1804),
 123
 Wuchang, 23-24
See also Military; Movements

W

Wang Jingwei, on citizenship, 21-22
 Wang Mang, 63, 66
 Western culture influence
 on citizenship, 3-4, 6-7, 13
 historically, 8-13, 33n22
 on citizenship consciousness, 41-48,
 279-281
 on civic associations, 142-144,
 145-146, 147, 148-149, 159-160
 on constitutional government,
 152-153, 154, 156, 160
 democracy and
 citizenship consciousness and,
 40-41, 44, 46-48, 49, 53-54
 intellectuals and, 44
 New Culture movement and, 53-54
 political parties and, 46-48
 Republicanism and, 232-236, 241,
 245, 250-252
 Tan Sitong and, 82-83, 88, 92
 on grouping and society, 42, 260, 261,
 262, 268-269, 270-271
 Liang Qichao and, 233, 234-236
 local self-government movement and,
 184-192, 196-199

Western culture influence (*continued*)
 capitalism and, 183, 184
 democracy and, 183, 184, 186, 187,
 189
 nationalism and, 74-75
 Old Text/New Text Confucian
 Classics and, 61-63, 74-75, 77-78
 on state and society relations, 119
 Tan Sitong and, 86-88, 90, 92, 95
 vs. Chinese culture, 41-42
 Western affairs movement and, 41, 43
 West River incident, 221-222
 White Lotus Rebellion (1796-1804), 123
 Work-Study Mutual Aid Association, 56
 Wuchang uprising, 23-24

X

Xi Song, 168, 171, 173-174

Y

Yan Fu (1853-1921), 41-42
 on civic associations, 143
 on concept of society, 214-215
 on grouping and society, 259, 261-262,
 266

Yan Fu (1853-1921) (*continued*)
 on local self-government movement,
 190, 191-192
 Yang Du, 237
 Yuan Shikai
 citizenship and, 16, 23-25
 constitutional monarchism and, 233,
 237, 239, 240, 241-250, 252-253
 local self-government movement and,
 204
 political parties and, 48-49, 51-52,
 53

Z

Zhang Binglin (1869-1936), 264
 citizenship and, 4-5, 14, 15
 Old Text/New Text Confucian
 Classics and, 75-77
 Zhang Jian, 193
 Zhang Shizhao, constitutional
 government and, 154-155,
 156-157, 159
 Zheng Guanying, local self-government
 and, 187-189
 "Zhi yan." *See* Tan Sitong (1854-1898)
 Zhuang Cunyu, 65-66